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Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL) is a recognised Scottish charity: No. SC030982.
Animal Concern Advice Line was established in 2001 to take on the charitable work of Animal Concern which was founded as the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society in 1876.
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To all ACAL Supporters,

Hi,

I hope that subject line got your attention. If you are on the e-mail lists of a few organisations you will have been inundated with requests to write to your MP and sign petitions calling on them to make a point of attending Parliament this coming Wednesday, July 15th, to vote against proposed amendments to the Hunting Act 2004.

My e-mail to Scottish MPs (copied below) will explain why this is such a vitally important issue.

If you live in England or Wales and have not written to your MP about this in the last two days please do so now telling them that you would like them to represent you in Parliament on Wednesday by voting against any and all proposed amendments to the Hunting Act 2004.

If you live in Scotland and even if you have already written to your MP I'd like you to write again.

All it needs is a short message saying something along the lines of: ***"I am a supporter of Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL). I believe you recently received an e-mail from the ACAL Secretary John Robins concerning the vote this Wednesday on amendments to the Hunting Act 2004. I would much appreciate it if, as my constituency MP, you would make a point of attending on Wednesday and voting against the amendments."***

You can contact your MP via this link: <https://www.writetothem.com/>

On a personal note, I'll be taking a few days off from the end of next week to give my wrist a chance to recover from the RSI injury which is making it very difficult for me to type. Before I go I'm trying to process a set of end of year books which are overdue for audit. Unless something really urgent comes up you will have a well-earned break from my e-mails for a couple of weeks. If you can get your e-mail off to your MPs before Monday it would be really appreciated.

This is especially important if you live in Scotland. If you can get a few friends to e-mail too that would also help.

Cheers 4 now,

John

To all MPs representing Scottish Constituencies.

Dear Member of Parliament,

Belated congratulations on being elected to Westminster and, for at least the next few days, being extremely popular with voters on both sides of the border and both sides of the fox hunting debate.

Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL) has supporters in all Scottish constituencies and you may well be contacted by some of them regarding the proposed amendments to the Hunting Act 2004 which you will have the chance to debate and vote on this coming Wednesday, July 15th.

From my understanding of the proposed amendments they will allow English and Welsh hunts to return to using full packs of hounds and to make more use of terriers, the small dogs that are put into fox dens to chase foxes out. More often than not this results in an underground dog fight where both fox and terrier can suffer terrible injuries.

Many people are arguing that these amendments will only bring England and Wales into line with Scotland where our hunting legislation allows the use of packs of hounds to flush foxes out, supposedly to be shot by waiting guns. The fact of the matter is that Scottish legislation on hunting with hounds is all but useless and does little to stop foxes being chased and ripped apart by packs of hounds.

Back in the days when I could jump a five bar gate more easily than I can open one today, I was hunt sabbing on a wet Saturday in Renfrewshire when there was a Celtic versus Rangers match on in Glasgow. Despite that Strathclyde Police managed to send several van and car loads of police to ensure the hunt could go ahead unhindered. Today, now that hunting is "banned" in Scotland, the activities of the hunts are not policed. The hunts are no longer routinely opposed by hunt sabs and the police don't as much as send PC Murdoch on his bike to ensure hunting laws are observed. Hunting goes on unpoliced and unfettered. Fox hunters in Scotland have never had it so good and hunters in England and Wales would love the same useless and toothless legislation.

Scotland has been used before by the pro-hunt lobby. In the debating stages of the Bill which became the Hunting Act 2004 a story circulated in Westminster about a group of Scottish "antis" who had attacked and almost killed three elderly anglers by pushing them into the River Teith near Callander. This was at a time when the pro-hunt lobby was desperate to get anglers on their side. A journalist from a Scottish Sunday newspaper discovered that Central Scotland Police, local angling clubs and tackle shops and even local publicans had never heard of such an incident. It was as real as Brigadoon but it was given credence in some political circles.

You may hear other myths on Wednesday. You'll hear about how much damage foxes do to lambs. What you will not hear is that a healthy ewe can fend off a fox. I have seen that on film and I have been eyewitness to a large dog fox being chased by a domestic cat. Admittedly that was on Langlands Road in Glasgow and she was a big Govan moggie. Pro hunters will not tell you about the tens of thousands of lambs which die every year at or soon after birth due to bad weather and exposure. Foxes will scavenge on dead lambs and they will kill orphaned or sickly lambs. However chasing foxes with dogs does not help sheep and lambs – better farming practises would.

Not only does chasing foxes with hounds fail to protect livestock it can have quite the opposite effect. I remember an incident outside Stirling when a farmer screamed at the police; "Get those f'ing idiots off my land." The police immediately moved in to arrest myself and some others who

were laying a false scent to mask the trail of a running fox. The farmer shouted again; “Not those f’ing idiots. The f’ing idiots riding their horses and chasing their dogs through my sheep. They’ll make them abort.”

I urge all of you to attend the debate on Wednesday and vote against the proposed amendments. Please do not let a weak law in Scotland be used as an excuse to water down legislation in England and Wales to remove what little protection foxes have. What we need in the future, both at Westminster and Holyrood, are new laws making it totally illegal to use dogs to deliberately chase, terrorise or injure any mammal.

The only type of hunting with dogs which should remain legal is drag hunting where hounds and riders follow a laid scent trail. The route can be designed to give riders a good day in the saddle while avoiding hazards such as roads and railway lines (where hounds are killed most years). They can also avoid damage to crops and terrorising farm livestock.

The big question of course is whether or not SNP MPs will attend and vote on Wednesday. I hope they will as this is a very important moral issue which is above party politics or national boundaries. Even if you are not passionate about animal welfare this free vote might be an opportunity to flex your political muscles in Westminster. After all was it not English constituency MPs voting at Westminster who gave Scotland the Poll Tax?

Yours sincerely,

John F. Robins
Secretary to ACAL

PS If you or your assistants need information on any animal related matter please do not hesitate to contact me. In the unlikely event I cannot help I should be able to put you in touch with people who can.