

Animal Concern, an organisation which has been campaigning for Animals in Scotland since 1876, has asked its members and supporters to vote yes in the referendum on Thursday. They have also asked other pressure groups and charities to urge their supporters in Scotland to vote for independence.

John Robins, Secretary of Animal Concern stated;

“Small is beautiful. With only 129 MSPs and proportional representation it is much easier for pressure groups and charities to exert influence on the current Scottish parliament. In an independent Scotland the contact between the electorate and those they elect will be far more responsive than at Westminster.

If independence is won I am sure that, like Churchill after WW2, Alex Salmond and his party will lose their current power within the Scottish Parliament and we will elect new Scottish parties which will much better defend the Scottish environment and the creatures which inhabit that environment. Independence would also give Scotland control over the many vivisection laboratories in Scotland including those which pose a risk to public health.”

Below is the message sent to Animal Concern supporters urging them to vote Yes.

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A few of you have e-mailed me urging me to vote Yes or No in the Scotland referendum this Thursday. Those e-mailing me are not paid-up Members of Animal Concern and did not receive our Annual Report which was mailed out to Members at the beginning of June.

In my Report to Members you will see that I urged our supporters living in Scotland to vote Yes this Thursday. I now extend that plea to those of you who are not on our snail mail list. I hope you will agree with my arguments in favour of Scotland becoming an independent country again. For those of you living in England, Wales and Northern Ireland I think Scottish independence would be a good thing as it would force a total rethink at Westminster and lead to better and fairer politics with proportional representation and political parties forced to take more notice of the electorate.

If you have a vote on Thursday please use it to create a new and vibrant Scotland and to force long overdue political change throughout Britain. If you don't have a vote please urge those that do to use it bravely and wisely. If you support other pressure groups and charities urge them to make an eleventh hour call to their supporters in Scotland to vote Yes on Thursday.

We will be able to create better laws and policies to protect animals, people and the environment in an independent Scotland. As things improve this side of Hadrian's Wall the electorate on the other side will not sit back and let Westminster continue along the socially divisive and exploitive path followed by successive Governments since the 1970s.

Small is Beautiful – let's prove that by making a big change this Thursday.

Cheers 4 now,

John

Here's what I said to Members in June: CAMPAIGN CONSULTANT'S REPORT

What I am about to say may cost Animal Concern some of our supporters. I'm going to talk politics and ask our Scottish based supporters to consider voting Yes in the independence referendum on 18th September. I must tell you that your Board of Directors are not unanimously behind me on this but they have agreed that I should put my case to you.

You may know from previous mailings that I have little time for Alex Salmond and his Ministers. On animal and environmental issues they are, at best, poorly educated and very badly advised. At worst they are a bloody liability and could cause the demise of several species of iconic animals in Scotland and the loss of important land and marine habitats.

However the referendum is not about the SNP or party politics. It is about whether or not Scotland should be run from London or Edinburgh. We deal with a maximum of 129 MSPs in Scotland but we have to lobby 650 MPs at Westminster. We also have a form (not the best form) of proportional representation in Scotland which has made it possible for independent and single issue candidates to be elected to the Parliament. We could, especially if like-minded organisations co-ordinate their lobbying, have a big influence on future Scottish Governments.

If Scots vote for independence I reckon Alex Salmond, like Winston Churchill after the Second World War, would be lucky to last another full term in Government. The Labour Party would be forced to establish a proper Scottish Labour Party instead of supplying New Labour in London with ballast at Westminster. The Lib Dems and Conservatives would also have to form Scottish Parties. When I started with the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society one of our Directors was a Conservative Councillor in Glasgow and several other Tory politicians have impressed me with their genuine concern for animals.

Another thing that would come with independence would be Scottish control of vivisection laboratories north of the border. These are currently controlled, amid much secrecy, by the Home Office in London. Control from Edinburgh, under a new law we would try to help shape, could make these labs far more open and accountable.

Other issues I am sure we could tackle successfully in an independent Scotland governed by a coalition with a number of Green and Lib Dem MSPs, include sentient slaughter of animals, puppy farming, animal circuses, snares and the persecution of raptors (and anything else which just might eat a pheasant or grouse chick).

Once we are rid of the SNP stranglehold we might even be able to stop the Norwegian fish farming industry using Scotland to launder Chinese money while destroying our marine wildlife and environment in the process.

So I ask those of you who have a vote on 18th September not to think about party politics but to think about the much wider picture and the old phrase "small is beautiful". The electorate in a democratic, independent Scotland would have far more influence than they have in a Great Britain centred on London and the Home Counties.

John F. Robins,

Secretary to Animal Concern, June 2014