

FROM THE FRONTLINES OF THE PROP B BATTLE....

The following comments by Karen Strange, President of MoFed, and Mindy Patterson, Communications Director for Alliance For Truth, detail the Campaign Against Prop B.

The Filing of the Ballot Initiative.....

(Karen): We knew it was coming, we just didn't know when. Members of the agriculture community had been meeting regularly throughout the summer and fall of 2009, anticipating that HSUS and their band of Kool-aid drinking followers would attack Missouri at some point. Although we had been hearing rumblings of Missouri being a possible target, we didn't know if it would be the 2010 or 2012 ballot, so we continued to build our allies in anticipation of the coming war.

It came sooner than we hoped when Tuesday evening before Thanksgiving 2009, Barbara Schmitz, HSUS Director for Missouri, dropped their proposal at Secretary of State Robin Carnahan's office. First thing Wednesday morning, I e-mailed the SOS office requesting the information under the Missouri State Sunshine Law. At 2:30 p.m., a reply came. I was stunned. I sat staring at the computer in disbelief when I saw the title, "Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act". I was sick. My first visions were of dog breeders literally being shoved down the river in a canoe with absolutely no one standing with us. Two petitions were turned in. A mistake was made on the first and a second was turned in minutes later. Our worst fears had become a reality.

It took half an hour for me to gather my thoughts and then the fighter in me began to emerge. We founded **MoFed** on the premise that we would fight any and all animal rights attacks on our interests, and fight we would! I sprang into action! I called long time ally Jeff Windett of the Cattlemen's Association as well as various leaders in **MoFed** and the pet industry. Our plotting began!

Thanksgiving weekend proved grueling as I had my mind on anything but celebrating! Monday morning, Windett called an emergency meeting for Tuesday of the **Missourians for Animal Care Ag Coalition (MoFAC)** to discuss various options. Our first decision was to file an immediate lawsuit against the ballot language to try to prevent it from going on the ballot. **MoFed** was called to a meeting with leaders of **MoFAC** and together, we hired a law firm to represent us.

The Lawsuit.....

Leslie Holloway and Kelly Smith of Farm Bureau, Don Nikodim of the Pork Producers, Dave Drennen of the Dairy Association, Dale Ludwig of the Soybean Association, and Lewis and myself of MoFed met with Chuck Hatfield and Michael Gibbons of the Stinson, Morrison & Hecker Law Firm to discuss Prop B. Both gentlemen had extensive experience in the political arena and were among the best to represent our interests against HSUS and their attack on Missouri. When filing the suit, a registered voter and resident of Missouri had to be named as the plaintiff. It could not be an association. The Ag coalition decided to move forward with my name listed as the plaintiff because I had the most experience directly fighting animal rights. Members of the coalition who stood with us were **MPBA, PPA, Farm Bureau, the Cattlemen's Assoc., Pork Producers, Dairy, Egg Council, Equine Council, MFA, FCS Financial, Soybean Assoc. and Corn Growers**. Donations poured in from all facets of the pet and agriculture industries.

Although we directly brought suit against the Secretary of State and the State Auditor, the Humane Society of Missouri quickly entered the lawsuit to "defend the poor puppies." What ensued was a nine month bitter fight between **MoFed** and HSMO; not our first time in court against one another!

The shenanigans they pulled in the lawsuit were unbelievable! Our first judge was Judge Wilson, a legal scholar highly respected among his peers. His rulings were in our favor on the various issues and our challenge looked good until HSMO (along with HSUS!) saw that they were losing. In a panic, they hired a new attorney for their case. It was the judge's brother! Judge Wilson had no choice but to excuse himself from the case! We were then assigned Judge Beetem, also a well respected judge. The battle

heated up as we continued our exposure of the true agenda of the animal rights groups to eliminate the pet industry by deliberately using prejudicial and offensive language to deceive the public into signing their petition and thus getting it on the ballot. They were reeling from a 91% public approval rating of their propaganda.

A tremendous amount of research went into the lawsuit, with many hours spent writing and analyzing every aspect of animal rights versus animal owner's rights. No stone was left unturned. One of our major battles with HSMO was a sealed envelope of theirs containing information we believed would help our case. We wanted it and they refused to give it! We believed they deliberately used the "puppy mill" term to play on the sympathies of the unknowing public. Judge Wilson had ruled in our favor to see that information so they hired his brother. Judge Beetem ruled along with Judge Wilson and they repealed, throwing the decision into the Western District Court of Appeals in Kansas City. Just days before we went to court, the Appeals Court ruled in favor of HSMO, basically tying the hands of Judge Beetem.

It has been said that I let the HSMO attorneys walk all over me in court. Court testimony is not like testifying at the capitol. Your own attorneys determine what you say. "Spilling the beans" only aids the opposition. In a court of law, facts are presented. Anything else is merely hearsay. Many of you heard excellent testimony from Rep. Jim Viebrock. The HSMO attorneys were successful in having all his testimony thrown out. It has been said that Judge Beetem was "paid off by the other side". He was not. HSMO and their band of attorneys successfully maneuvered their way to victory with very questionable actions. Saying more than "yes" or "no" would only have provided them with more ammunition against our side.

The ruling against us was disappointing, but seeing the firsthand actions by HSMO aided by HSUS only fueled the fire in the belly of **MoFed**. We despised them before; we despised them even more now! The next battle began immediately!

The Campaign Against Prop B.....

(Mindy): I facilitated two educational symposiums sponsored by the Missourians for Animal Care agriculture coalition which took place in late June, 2010. One at the American Royal in Kansas City, where Karen Strange, Kelly Smith, and Dr. Alan Wessler of MFA spoke to an audience of fifty people. The other took place at Pillar in the Valley in Chesterfield, a 5,000 square foot office where conservative groups and politicians rent as a meeting place. Kerry Messer, Chris Chinn and Karen Strange spoke to an audience of 100 people at our evening symposium, including an animal rights activist who made an unsuccessful attempt to crash the party. Meanwhile, Kelly Smith of Farm Bureau traveled the entire state with a power point presentation exposing the true agenda of HSUS and other animal rights groups, educating the masses about our fight and the attack against agriculture by out of state special interest groups.

Immediately following the symposium at Pillar in the Valley, Karen Strange and I were invited by the owners of this office complex for dinner after the program. This couple took the opportunity over our private dinner meeting to express their horror about what they had learned that evening about the animal rights movement, and saw clearly that **Proposition B** was nothing but a deceptive measure to take more control of our lives. Karen and I both had the sense that they wanted to help in some way, but that had not yet been revealed.

Four weeks later, I was invited to lunch by one of the owners of Pillar in the Valley. We were joined by her daughter who was introduced to me as a person who had been a national campaign director for many high profile campaigns. After a serious discussion about what a full-blown political campaign entailed, I agreed that this was the direction we needed. I was barely out the door from the restaurant after my lunch meeting before I had Karen on the phone to discuss the idea. We both agreed that we should go for it!

By August 24, 2010, I was settled in my office at Pillar and we were in full campaign mode. We had the official "blessing" of the executive committee of Missourians for Animal Care and the many

organizations involved. We agreed we would work in concert to fight for the common goal to defeat **Proposition B** and had shown our unity at the Missouri State Fair in early August by distributing printed pieces, yard signs and hand-held fans to fairgoers. MPBA, PPA and MoFed had a joint booth along with displays set up in various venues by Farm Bureau, the Cattlemen Assoc., Pork Producers and Soybean Association. Numerous flyers were distributed at our booths. Support against **Prop B** was overwhelming!

My first duty as campaign manager was to raise money. I made immediate headway in my efforts to get to the decision makers of many large corporations -- but almost all were reluctant to donate money to *The Alliance for Truth* campaign because they feared that Missouri would compromise with HSUS like Ohio had just weeks prior. Ohio's actions devastated our fundraising efforts so we had to turn to grassroots hard work.

By mid-September, the generous financial contributions of **MoFed, MPBA and PPA** to **The Alliance For Truth**, allowed the campaign to move forward and launch a ROBO call, several radio ads, and helped finance all of our printed push pieces.

I was in daily, no... *hourly* contact with Karen Strange throughout the campaign. I recall one morning in mid-September, calling Karen after *The Alliance for Truth* campaign director had made a very strong declaration in our morning meeting that campaign signs were worthless, and that we would not be spending any money on signs. My call to Karen was to tell her that **PPA, MPBA, and MoFed** would have to finance their own signs, and that they did. Mid-America Pets and various others in the pet industry also made signs along with Farm Bureau and the Soybean Association.

Vote NO on **Prop. B** signs began to pop up like mushrooms all across our state! I had people calling into *The Alliance for Truth* campaign office asking how they could get yard signs or 4' x 8' signs! I had people telling me that, had it not been for the **Vote NO** on Prop B signs, they would not have known about the issue and that the signs prompted them to investigate what the measure was all about. I believe those signs were a very significant element of success to our unified campaign, and without them, we would not have made the huge amount of headway in such short order! **PPA** made bright colored t-shirts that sprang up everywhere. Breeders wore them wherever they went, talking in lines at Wal-mart and grocery stores and anywhere they could about voting No on Prop B. **MPBA** members joined forces and wore the t-shirts throughout southern Missouri. A huge rally was held in Mountain Grove and other areas of the state to raise money and awareness about Prop B.

By mid-October, **MoFED, MPBA, and PPA** were directly assisting *The Alliance for Truth's* efforts to make campaign phone banking a success. All organizations were sending people to the campaign office, with some driving three, four, and five hours to work 6-8 hour days of making phone calls to registered voters. Meanwhile, more yard signs and 4' x 8' signs were flying out the door, including new ones printed by *The Alliance For Truth Campaign!*

We may not have known it at the time, but launching an actual political campaign was an ideal way to create a central point of communication for contact with the press. And since The Alliance for Truth appeared to have sprung up out of thin air, it intrigued many of the reporters covering the election. Accordingly, our campaign received a great deal of coverage from statewide television, radio, and newspaper reporters.

One of the turning points of the campaign took place when I attended the September 12th Tea Party Rally at the St. Louis Arch along with Karen Strange, Barb York, Cathy Griesbauer, Hubert & Sharon Lavy, Pam Middleton and others. There were about 12 of us who attended with our **Prop B** educational materials and push pieces determined to inform the 8,000 to 10,000 people in attendance.

This event was a turning point to our campaign because it engaged the St. Louis Tea Party who understood the government intrusion aspect of Proposition B. From this point on, we had the Tea Party working hard in our favor, and it is my belief that the Tea Party movement contributed greatly to our success in the urban areas of Missouri.

The Election.....

(Karen and Mindy): To take the campaign from a 91% approval rating for HSUS to defeating it in 103 of 114 counties was nothing short of a miracle! In the final three weeks of the campaign, **Mr. Forrest Lucas of Lucas Cattle Company** (and owner of Lucas Oil) came forward with television and radio ads that brought the **Prop B** proponents to their knees! He attacked HSUS for their true agenda and was a last minute push to our campaign. All the grassroots work, the unities with agriculture and other organizations, the power point presentations by Kelly Smith, yard signs, bumper stickers, newspaper and radio ads, letters to the editors, rallies and growing support from the general public came to a head with the onslaught of the Lucas ads. We truly felt the cavalry had come! What were once insurmountable odds were suddenly obtainable.

We held our breaths election night as the numbers began rolling in. We maintained a commanding lead throughout the night, and it was only after the urban votes in Kansas City and St. Louis as well as two counties in the boot heel came in that we sank to our knees by only 60,000 votes of 1.9 million cast!

Where Do We Go From Here?.....

Although we lost by a very slim margin, we celebrated a great victory!! We were attacked in late 2009 by the largest and wealthiest animal rights organization in the world. Rather than cowering to their lies and propaganda, we united our forces and fought back. We were told by numerous political advisors that we could not defeat HSUS by attacking them. Rather, we had to tell the public that we take better care of our animals than HSUS. We ignored their advice and attacked our enemy with a vengeance! We exposed their true agenda of eliminating animal ownership and agriculture as we know it. Each time they told the public it was “only about dogs” we fired back that it was a direct attack against all agriculture! When they showed emotional pictures in television ads, we fired back that the breeders and veterinarians portrayed were not representative of what they were saying. We proved that banding together with other agriculture interests created a formidable force. We talked to everyone who would listen and found that the public was hungry for the truth. We created public awareness that has not waned, and we have continued our march for taking back our rights against the onslaught by outside special interest groups buying our state laws!

Prop B made changes to our state law, not our constitution, so it can be amended or repealed in the state legislature. We are working on many avenues to make the necessary changes to ensure that the pet industry will continue to thrive. We may not have won this particular battle, but we are winning the war against animal rights. Won't you join with us?