



February 5, 2024

Chair Korman
Vice Chair Boyce
Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB0379 (Wildlife - Traveling Animal Acts – Prohibition)

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

The North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA) is a coalition of eight of the leading primate sanctuaries on the continent. Amongst its other functions, NAPSA serves as a central point of contact and expertise for issues relating to captive primates. NAPSA member sanctuaries collectively provide exceptional care to close to 800 nonhuman primates retired from laboratory research, private ownership, and the entertainment industry. Each full member sanctuary is licensed and inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) or its Canadian equivalent, licensed by relevant state and county authorities, and accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries.

We write to you today in support of HB0379, as it would prohibit the use of exotic species including nonhuman primates in traveling animal acts. While exotic animal performances may seem amusing on the surface, primates used in these spectacles are poorly treated. Although the records of many animal rental operators are generally less than stellar, and training and housing conditions can be incredibly stressful (and often abusive), the simple fact that primates are forced to dress up and perform on cue in a terribly unnatural situation is reason enough to avoid such events and keep them out of your community.

Though our expertise pertains to primate species, note that many of the ways that primates suffer due to their use in entertainment is not species-specific. Experts agree that the use of exotic animals in entertainment is very problematic; NAPSA's position statement on the topic (attached) includes more details and supporting references. We strongly urge your Committee members to make the right choice and encourage increased public safety, higher standards of animal welfare, and a stronger commitment to end this archaic industry so that captive animals may lead more species-appropriate lives.

We urge Maryland to vote YES on HB0379.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Erika Fleury'.

Erika Fleury
Director



Advocacy Position Statement Performing Primates

The North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA) is opposed to the use of trained primates for entertainment. As experts in the field of primate care, we respectfully ask the public not to support public events featuring trained monkeys and apes.

While such performances may seem amusing on the surface, the primates used in these spectacles are poorly treated. Although the records of many animal rental operators are generally less than stellar, and training and housing conditions can be incredibly stressful (and often abusive), the simple fact that primates are forced to dress up and perform on cue in a terribly unnatural situation is reason enough to avoid such events.

The entire lifetime of a primate is negatively affected when they are exploited for entertainment. As infants, they are removed from their mothers at a very early age – years before they would naturally separate. They are trained using methods that intimidate and inhibit their innate behaviors. Even then, the intelligence and unpredictable nature of these wild animals means that they often can only be used for a short time as actors before they become too independent, unmanageable, and dangerous. Primates are then deemed useless to the entertainment industry, and sold into situations that range from uncomfortable to downright harmful. The lucky ones are able to spend the remaining years of their life in a primate sanctuary.

NAPSA is a coalition of the leading primate sanctuaries on the continent. In our member sanctuaries, we care for close to 800 primates, many of whom were formerly used in entertainment. We see how primates are forever damaged by the work forced upon them, and we look forward to the day when such archaic practices are no longer permitted.

For more information:

["The Use of Primate "Actors" in Feature Films 1990–2013."](#) Brooke Catherine Aldrich

["Primate Portrayals: Narratives and Perceptions of Primates in Entertainment."](#) B.C. Aldrich et al.

["Apes in Media and Commercial Performances."](#) Association of Zoos & Aquariums

["Bengals Shocking Half-Time 'Cowboy Monkey' Has a Cruel History."](#) The Dodo

["Chimpanzees in Media."](#) ChimpCARE

["Opposition to the Use of Nonhuman Primates in the Media."](#) International Primatological Society

["Atypical Experiences of Captive Chimpanzees \(Pan Troglodytes\) Are Associated with Higher Hair Cortisol Concentrations as Adults."](#) S.L. Jacobson et al.

["Impact of Visual Context on Public Perceptions of Non-Human Primate Performers."](#) K. A. Leighty et al.