Animal Law Committee Survey Results
2013

What do you think the goals of the Animal Law Committee should be?

To promote animal welfare and to prevent cruelty to animals.

To promote the protection and welfare of animals in our state, strengthen animal welfare laws and penalties for those who break them, and advocate for animal welfare and rights.

To act as a reference resource for bar members, the public where appropriate; to make recommendations where appropriate on issues relating to animals.

To track legislation of all types which concerns animals, to educate the public and the bar and to lobby the legislature regarding bills of import.

I am confused as to whether the Committee should be setting its own goals since we are a creature of the Board of Governors. From the website, it says: "The Animal Law Committee will provide education, updates and analysis of relevant issues, and regular meetings to discuss the changes and new directions in animal law. The Committee will maintain a website and offer CLE and public service programs. It shall also serve as a reference point to facilitate cooperation with government agencies, non-governmental humane societies, rescue organizations, animal clubs, breeders of animals, and other entities and persons involved in legal issues affecting animals." It does not appear as if we are to do anything other than be a source of information (analysis, trainings, etc.) for the Bar and the public, as well as a liaison between the Bar and other groups/entities involved or interested in issues related to animal law.

Raise awareness among themselves, the legal community, and the community in general about animal welfare issues. Also- join together to tackle any issues that we as a legal community, and also as regular people, can work to alleviate.

I think the goals should be broad and inclusive to encompass issues that concern the welfare and treatment of animals as well as the laws that protect them.

To proactively advocate for the welfare of animals in SC to act independently from vet interests and breeders' interests. Those groups have income, and that income can further their interests.

I believe that the goals should be making sure that we are making ourselves and the public aware of any animal welfare issues that arise in the legislature. Additionally, I think we should serve as a network to help organizations (Humane Society) with legal assistance. I believe it is our job to protect the interests of the animals who cannot speak for themselves.

Our group should help to promote legislation that would prevent cruelty, give stiffer penalties to animal abusers, stricter spay and neuter regulations, and the list goes on. I think we need to stay on top of proposed legislation and make the committee aware of new laws that pass regarding animal welfare. Most of all I think she needs to serve as the voice to helpless/ voiceless animals.

Educate public as to laws affecting animals.

To educate and assist bar members in various disputes involving animals including but not limited to tort, contract, property, family, taxation, trusts & estates, insurance, criminal, administrative, international & environmental. To educate the public in the various aspects of animal law. To educate, guide & advocate for legislation to benefit animals owners & their animals in addition to modify areas of animal law/regulations.

First we need to see what other state bars are doing and then adopt those best practices. Second. We then need to adopt SC specific goals. Third, we need to establish clear lines of subject matter we can coordinate our policy and goals with established org. that advocate for animal law.

To address all areas of Animal Law.

To protect animals, domestic and farm animals. To change legislation regarding the protection of animals.

Welfare of animals.

To educate the Bar about various aspects of animal law.

The protection of animal welfare.

Hello this is Peg Tribert and I have previously drafted a proposed mission statement and submitted it to the committee on Oct 23.

I like the document that Peg Tribert submitted.

In what ways (if any) would you like to see the Animal Law Committee work on animal welfare or animal rights issues? Animal welfare means animals used for human benefits should be used responsibly and absent any unnecessary suffering or exploitation. Animal Rights means animals, like humans, have rights that while not absolute, cannot be taken away for human benefits. Generally, animal rights means animals should not be used for food, clothing, entertainment, or experimentation.

Animal welfare.

Take a position on relevant legislation. Offer education on trends across the country promoting animal welfare and rights. Assisting communities in their attempts to improve animal welfare and rights.

I believe stating either of those things in our mission and purpose limits our work much too severely. I do not believe we should be advocates for animal rights and while I would like to believe that everyone believe in animal welfare, it is clear that the term means different things to different people, just as child welfare does. I believe we should be aware of emerging developments but very cautious in embracing any position that does not enjoy the widespread support of the committee.

I would like the ALC to work on animal welfare and to some degree animal rights, by the method in number 1.

I would limit the Committee's work on animal rights to only issues related to criminal abuse or neglect of animals (so as to avoid the divisive issues related to the use of animals as food, clothing, drug testing, etc.).

Raise awareness, discuss how we as legal professionals can help eradicate the issues, discuss how we as regular civilians can help to eradicate issues.

I think the Committee should be open to the animal rights debate, should track and follow legislative efforts and case law that includes animal rights, and should be in a position to contribute to that dialogue as a resource. I do not think the Committee should adopt a position advocating for or against animal rights.

In addition to being aware of current laws and proposed changes in the law, I would like for the ALC to support requests from members and the community to advocate for animal welfare. Animal rights is too polarizing a label, and too unpopular to get any traction in SC. People in SC understand animal welfare better than animal rights. Animal rights in SC would be a losing battle.

I would fight more for Animal Welfare; I think that is the bigger issue and concern. I stated in Section 1 how I feel we should work on Animal Welfare. I believe as a committee of many voices ideas that we could really make a difference in helping organizations understand the laws and help fight the laws that would be a detriment to animal welfare (unnecessary suffering & exploitation). We could possibly have a committee vote on proposed legislation and see where we stand. If we have a strong position then we can have 1 or 2 figureheads who would represent our interest as a whole and speak on our behalf at hearings as to that legislation. Also make the public aware of the welfare issues through a social network site.

Agricultural issues.

This should not be the focus of the ALC. That is what lobbying groups do. Animal rights are best left to lobbying organizations whose purpose is to change the law. A bar committee should work within the law to provide guidance & expertise on the law. To do otherwise is confusing to the bar members & public. Animal welfare issues should be only one part of ALC & not a priority but care should be taken to not allow it to become a venue to push animal rights. It is very difficult to distinguish animal rights v. animal welfare & these issues are fraught with difficulty. They are not clearly defined & will only cause dissent within this committee.

I am not sure at this time I have enough facts to make this decision. What assessments exist as to what the problems are now and into the future in SC?

We should address animal welfare; not sure about animal rights.

I agree.

Referenced resources for attorney and South Carolina legislature.

I think the animal law committee needs a subcommittee for animal welfare. I don't think we should address animal rights until a later time when the committee has done more work on aspects of animal law.

I believe in animal welfare, but I also believe that animals should not be used for entertainment, nor should farm animals be exposed to factory farming conditions.

I believe we could work to increase awareness of animal cruelty as defined by current statutes and work to increase those penalties. I believe we could work specifically to address the pregnant mare urine industry and animals used for cosmetic research. I do not believe that we should be working for animal rights as this is a hugely subjective definition.

It's not my top priority.

Do you think the committee should have an attendance policy that would determine inclusion in committee votes or other membership activities?

Absolutely. Some of the most unnecessarily abusive language in recent posts comes from folks who are out of state and probably don't attend.

I believe that to be a committee of educated people, the members should be required to attend a percentage of the phone meetings or physical meetings every quarter. This way we know that our committee members are educated on the issues and provide valuable discussion in the committee forum.

Yes

Yes. If there are really 40 people on the ALC, that seems much too large.

No -- because this is an appointed committee for which Bar members volunteer and are appointed by the President. I see this as very different from an elected position. I do think that you should have to be present/participating in a meeting to vote -- we should NOT allow voting by proxy or by absentee vote. Having said that, I think it is also important that Committee members receive advance notice of issues that may be voted on at meetings.

No, just because someone can't make a meeting does not mean they don't have a vested interest in animal issues.

I think it would be helpful. I am new to the Committee, but because the calls/meeting have been on Friday I have been out of town or unavailable and not able to participate thus far. Seeing the recent e-mail exchanges did make me step back and question becoming involved in the Committee, but I am still interested in doing so.

I would agree with that, as long as phone attendance counts. It’s too far for many people to drive to Columbia, but their time and opinions are valuable.

Yes, I think that you should be able to miss a max of 2 meetings each year.

Yes

Yes. A committee is only as good as it's members. If they wish to have a voice then they must remain active. There is no need to have inactive committee members who use it simply to burnish their resumes.

Yes

Yes

Yes, we should only vote when we have a quorum.

Yes

Votes need a quorum, but we need to make sure that members are active and not just on the list of members.

Yes

Yes. I think people need to attend the general committee meetings in person and these meetings should not be open to telephone conferences. Telephone conferences should only be used for subcommittee meetings, where there are fewer attendees.

Yes. However, attendance by phone should remain an option.

Yes. I propose 80% attendance.

Only if we actually get advanced notice of the meetings. I heard about the first one 2 days in advance, and only heard of this one by accident.

Please respond to the following statement: The Animal Law Committee should prioritize animal welfare in its goals. (Animal welfare means animals used for human benefits should be used responsibly and absent any unnecessary suffering or exploitation.)

Answer Choices –	Responses –	
Strongly Oppose	**1** **4.76%**	
Oppose	**0**	**0%**
Neutral	**3** **14.29%**	
Agree	**5** **23.81%**	
Strongly Agree	**12** **57.14%**	
Total	**21**	

The Animal Law Committee should prioritize animal rights in its goals. (Animal Rights means animals, like humans, have rights that while not absolute, cannot be taken away for human benefits. Generally, animal rights means animals should not be used for food, clothing, entertainment, or experimentation.)

Answer Choices –	Responses –	
Strongly Oppose	**4**	**19.05%**
Oppose	**2**	**9.52%**
Neutral	**8**	**38.10%**
Agree	**3**	**14.29%**
Strongly Agree	**4**	**19.05%**
Total	**21**	

The Animal Law Committee mission statement should address and support animal welfare.

Answer Choices –	Responses –	
Strongly Oppose	0	0%
Oppose	2	10%
Neutral	3	15%
Agree	4	20%
Strongly Agree	11	55.00%
Total	20	

The Animal Law Committee mission statement should address and support animal rights.

Answer Choices –	Responses –	
Strongly Oppose	3	14.29%
Oppose	3	14.29%
Neutral	7	33.33%
Agree	5	23.81%
Strongly Agree	3	14.29%
Total	21	

The Animal Law Committee should vote to support, oppose, or remain neutral on relevant legislation that would affect animal welfare or animal rights. (The committee would vote on each bill, independently.)

Answer Choices –	Responses –	
Strongly Oppose	1	4.76%
Oppose	3	14.29%
Neutral	2	9.52%
Agree	6	28.57%
Strongly Agree	9	42.86%
Total	21	

The Animal Law Committee should have a subcommittee set up specifically to address and promote animal welfare.

Answer Choices –		Responses –
Strongly Oppose	1	4.76%
Oppose	1	4.76%
Neutral	3	14.29%
Agree	5	23.81%
Strongly Agree	11	52.38%
Total	21	

Please share any additional thoughts or questions about the Animal Law Committee.

Communications among members should always be polite and collegial.

We should have a protocol for conducting meetings.

I think that, when possible, the Committee should review relevant legislation and submit to the House of Delegates/Board positions that it wishes the Bar to take on such. Ditto for proposing legislation. It may be, because the Committee is so greatly (and, on some points, apparently bitterly) divided, that operating guidelines are developed to require that no action be taken unless a greater percentage than simple majority agree.

I think the Committee should first and foremost be the expertise of the Bar on all issues affecting animals. It should be careful about adopting formal positions or conducting lobbying activities that may not have the support of the Committee or the Bar.

Sorry this is so hurried and not in depth but leaving town... am afraid if I don't send this I will accidentally delete it like I did the first time I got it! It would be interesting to see a breakdown of ALC members, where animals fit into their own lives, and what they have done to make the world better for animals. I am a horse owner (event and jumping), I have 4 cats from prisons and shelters and a dog from a dump and a dog from a crack house. I have worked hard to help make the Department of Corrections do TNR on their cats instead of killing them. I have paid for a lot of it. I spay and neuter pets in very poor neighborhoods and support several shelters. I feel like I have some skin in this game!

A committee to address animal welfare would then have to make a recommendation to the full committee for a vote on any legislation. That in itself will make the ALC much more of a lobbying organization than a bar organization. Issues of animal rights & animal welfare are not clearly defined. What is abuse/neglect to one member may not be to another member. To focus on these areas will create dissent & frustration within the committee.

Animal rights as defined in this survey as regarding use of animals as food should NOT be included in a primary understanding of animal law for the committee as I see this as a sub issue. However, the committee must focus on the issue of animal welfare regarding the use of animals as a food source.

We should always respect the views of others on this committee and not fight like dogs and cats.

I do not practice animal law. I volunteer for animal rescue organizations. I believe animals need more protection under SC law. Based on the recent e-mail traffic, I am considering resigning from the committee because I feel my time may be more productive working directly with animal rescue. Also, the attitude and somewhat personal attacks by certain individuals does not make me want to be apart of the committee. Members should be reminded of the attorney civility code. I also do not know that I can volunteer my time to work with people who want to debate the pros and cons of bear baiting or similar awful acts. I am alarmed by the number of self-professed hunters who want to be on the committee to keep it in check so to speak. I cannot imagine what the committee would accomplish if those individuals were in charge. With such a strong divide in committee members, and some members involved to prevent the committee from becoming to pro-animal rights, I am not sure the committee will be able to accomplish much.

It would be helpful if we had an agenda a few days prior to the meetings. We also need guidelines based on Roberts' Rules for participation in meetings, making motions and voting.

The animal law committee can only make recommendations to the Board or Delegates; we are not a lobby organization. This questionnaire addresses only a very small component of animal law.

We don't need to be co-opted by a bunch of PETA loonies. Animal Welfare is just a small part of animal law. We need to be much broader in our focus.