

PRESS RELEASE

Sunday, March 20, 2011

Petition for Rulemaking to Florida Department of Education
Classroom Animal Slaughter Challenge
www.upc-online.org/classroom/110310rally_hawthorne.html

On Mar. 9, 2011, petitioners Susan Hargreaves with Humane Educators Reaching Out (“HERO”) and Dr. Karen Davis of United Poultry Concerns (“UPC”)[1] filed a [Petition for Agency Action](#) with the Florida Department of Education, seeking the promulgation of new or clarified rules in the areas of humane treatment of animals and banning animal slaughter in K-12 classrooms, pursuant to the statutory mandates of Florida education law.

Catalyzing this petition was the highly publicized criminal prosecution of Hawthorne High School students Patrick Ruebin Dougan and Robert Sylvester Gordon with the crime of cruelty to animals in relation to a chicken allegedly tortured during a classroom slaughter project. The violent YouTube video that sparked the investigation by law enforcement can be seen at www.upc-online.org/hawthorne/.

Attached to this release is a [copy of the actual Petition](#) filed with the Commissioner of Education, the Superintendent of Schools for Alachua County, and the Principal for Hawthorne High School. Unlike other states, Florida’s progressive educational system seeks to safeguard the humane treatment of animals. This explains why the mere fact that the Dougan-Gordon incident occurred struck the petitioners as incomprehensible and evidenced systemic failure by educational leadership to implement and comply with the statutory mandate. It also justifies the petitioners’ demand for remedial instruction or discipline of the former Hawthorne High School Principal Robert Craig and FFA teacher Allen Shaw (who ran the class where the Dougan-Gordon incident took place).

On Mar. 31, 2011, from noon to 1 p.m., Dr. Davis, Ms. Hargreaves, and Mr. Karp will assemble at the Orange County Courthouse at 425 N. Orange Ave., Orlando, FL to rally and protest to end animal slaughter in Florida schools. To learn more, see www.upc-online.org/classroom/110310rally_hawthorne.html.

Further, on Apr. 2, 2011, Mr. Karp will give the keynote address at Barry University’s Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law’s first *Animal Law Forum*. He will discuss this petition, as well as other highlights from his thirteen years exclusively practicing animal law in the talk *Animal Law as a Practice – Opportunities and Challenges*. Dr. Davis and Ms. Hargreaves will also be present to answer questions about the petition. To learn more about the conference, see <http://www.barry.edu/law/news/details.htm?ID=18692&webid=30>. Also presenting at the conference will be the prosecutor of Dougan and Gordon, Geoffrey C. Fleck.

Pursuant to Florida state law, the Department of Education must respond to the petition within 30 days of receipt by either initiating rulemaking proceedings, complying with the

requested action, or denying the petition with a written statement of its reasons for denial. FS 120.54(7)(a).

For more information, contact Karen Davis at (757) 678-7875, Susan Hargreaves at (561) 575-5517, or Adam Karp at (888) 430-0001.

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[1] Pages 11-19 of the [Petition](#) outline the credentials, accolades, and substantial interests of the two executive directors and their organizations in presenting this urgent issue to the Department of Education.