



**SCIL**  
Social Compassion  
in Legislation

March 27, 2024

The Honorable Ash Kalra  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 3053 (Kalra) State-supported fairs: exhibits: regulations. – Support Letter**

Dear Assemblymember Kalra:

As proud sponsors, we write to thank you for authoring AB 3053.

The bill will require that state fair rules allow junior exhibitors to opt out of terminal sales at any time before the animal is transported from the fairgrounds, and ensure that winning bidders are allowed to pick up the animal alive if they so choose. The bill also mandates that families who do opt out of a terminal sale auction reimburse the fair for any reasonable costs incurred. Implementing these rules statewide will ensure that the process for opting out of a terminal sale is uniform across California, thereby avoiding legal action that can ensue when children have a change of heart and their families are desperate to save an animal's life.

For over a century, children across the nation have participated in agricultural youth programs like 4-H and Future Farmers of America. These programs offer an assortment of activities like camping, engineering, and other sciences, but are best known for giving children the opportunity to raise livestock animals, exhibit them in market competitions, and sell them at auction.

In California, junior livestock exhibitions are governed by the Fairs and Exhibitions Branch of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). According to CDFA's rules, a fair can require any animal that has been entered into a market competition and qualified by a market judge to then be entered into a terminal auction, that is, an auction that ends with the animal's slaughter.

Under current state rules, there is no way to withdraw an animal from a terminal auction once it has been entered into a market competition, nor can a winning bidder choose to take it home alive.

These rules do not reflect evolving attitudes regarding animal welfare. Some of the families that participate in youth agricultural programs grow to appreciate the individuality of the animals they raise and do not want to subject them to slaughter. Furthermore, some bidders value their new animals' lives more than their meat and may prefer to take them home alive, which a "live pickup" option would allow for.

This dilemma was recently illustrated by an incident involving a nine-year-old 4-H participant and her junior livestock exhibition goat, Cedar. After Cedar was sold in a terminal auction, the participant changed her mind and wanted her goat to live. There was no codified mechanism to stop the terminal auction process, and Cedar was slaughtered for meat even though his buyer, Senator Brian Dahle, gave permission to cancel the sale.

A state rule allowing for families to opt out of the auction sale up until the time of offsite transport could have prevented this regrettable and highly publicized incident.

AB 3053 will offer families that choose to honor their child's compassionate decision to save an animal's life a path that avoids confrontation with fair officials. This bill protects parental rights while still allowing for terminal sales and does not stop any family from sending the animal raised by their child to slaughter, contrary to some states like North Dakota that have ended terminal sales, or Minnesota which greatly restricts terminal sales.

For this and the reasons stated above, we thank you for authoring AB 3053 and urge your colleagues in the legislature to vote 'aye' on this important bill.

Sincerely,