



**HUMANE**  
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## The Biggest Deception on Television?

There's a big gap between what HSUS does and what the public thinks HSUS does. According to recent national polling, 68 percent of Americans think HSUS spends most of its money funding local pet shelters, yet HSUS CEO Wayne Pacelle readily admits that only about 20 percent of HSUS's efforts involve pets. Further, HSUS donates just 1 percent of its budget to pet shelters.

Is this perception-reality gap merely incidental, or is HSUS consciously creating misperception? We have new evidence that suggests HSUS's ads are misleading Americans. We asked the Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG) to compile a report of all of the ads aired by HSUS from 2009 to September 2011.

### By the Numbers:

**\$8,000:** Estimated air time cost of HSUS ads with fine-print disclaimers

**\$11.2 million:** Estimated air time cost of HSUS ads without disclaimers

**1%:** Percentage of HSUS budget given to pet shelters

**85%+:** Percentage of animals in HSUS commercials that are dogs and cats

**3:** Number of HSUS ads since 2009 with a quick, fine-print disclaimer

**25:** Number of HSUS ads since 2009 without a disclaimer

**65:** Total airings of ads with a fine-print disclaimer

**20,674:** Total airings of ads without a disclaimer



Only a few HSUS ads have a short, fine-print disclaimer

After analyzing the CMAG report, an appalling (although not unexpected) discovery emerged: of the 28 ads aired over 20,000 times, more than 85 percent of animals shown in HSUS TV ads asking for donations are dogs or cats—many of which are behind cages. When HSUS asks people to donate, it almost exclusively emphasizes the care and rescue of pets.

What's wrong with this? To start, HSUS gave 1 percent of its \$126 million budget to help local pet shelters. At the same time, according to national polling, 71 percent of Americans mistakenly believe that HSUS is a pet-shelter umbrella group. Fifty-nine percent wrongly believe that HSUS gives most of its money to local shelters, and 63 percent have been duped into thinking that HSUS is affiliated with their local humane organization. Similarly, 71 percent of animal shelters say "HSUS misleads people into thinking it is associated with local animal shelters."

HSUS has retorted that its ads include a disclaimer stating that HSUS is separate from local pet shelters. However, our analysis of CMAG's report found that between 2009 and September 2011, fewer than 1 percent

of HSUS's television donation appeals include any such disclaimer. The CMAG report also estimated that HSUS spent over \$11.2 million running more than 20,000 TV spots without a disclaimer. It's fair to conclude that HSUS largely allows the proven misperception to stand unaddressed (while HSUS rakes in the cash).

Even HSUS's Christmas merchandise focuses on pets. Our review discovered that almost 90 percent of HSUS's "Everything Christmas" collection features pets, yet needy shelter pets will likely never see the proceeds made off of the pet-themed Christmas gifts.

If most of HSUS's money doesn't go towards pets, then why does HSUS focus on cute puppies and kittens? It's not rocket science: More people like cute puppies and kittens, than animal-rights agendas. Imagine if HSUS's ads showed videos of where the money actually goes: the organization's pension plan, promoting a vegan agenda, and even more fundraising. We're going to bet it wouldn't have the same return.

HSUS seems very comfortable continuing to run ads in which children and celebrities ask you to donate money to save the cute dogs and cats flashing across the screen. With celebrity spokesmen and millions of dollars to spend on advertising, how are real local pet shelters supposed to compete?



The vast majority of HSUS ads have no disclaimer

Several local shelters have decided to change their names by eliminating the words "humane society" to help stop the confusion. It's unfortunate that shelters need to go to such extreme lengths to distance themselves from the controversy HSUS brings to the "humane society" name.

Educating friends and family is a great first step to protect them from falling for HSUS's emotional, misleading donation requests. Next time a loved one is thinking about donating to the cute puppies and kittens in HSUS ads, encourage them to instead donate locally where it can be assured the money will go towards helping needy pets, not towards some executive's wallet or an animal-rights agenda.



If you've been duped by the Humane Society of the United States' ads, file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at: <https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov>