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Animal Protection Voters Endorses Candidates for State Legislature

Albuquerque, NM (May 8, 2006)—Several pro-animal candidates have won endorsement from Animal Protection Voters, a statewide animal advocacy organization.

In some races, incumbents with stellar voting records on animal issues won endorsement for consistently supporting legislation that favors animals. In other cases, new candidates in primary legislative races were asked their positions on such issues as cockfighting, creating standards for the state's animal shelters and conservation of wildlife habitat. Each endorsed candidate has pledged to take a pro-animal position on these issues or has already demonstrated a commitment to promoting strong laws for animals at the state level.

The endorsed candidates are:

New Candidates:

Kevin Cronk—House district 7

Kevin Cronk's two rescued dogs—a Chow and a beagle—were “throw-aways” but are now very much a part of his family. Cronk believes that animal cruelty needs to be severely punished—he recently witnessed a kitten being thrown out a car window on a busy road. Cronk wants to help implement a statewide ban on cockfighting as well as implement free spay and neuter clinics. Cronk also supports the regulation of animal shelters, euthanasia providers and animal-related businesses like pet shops and grooming parlors. He supports the creation of a permanent source of funding for land and wildlife conservation.

Patrick Baca, Jr.—House district 16

Patrick Baca Jr. adopted his dog, Jackie, from an animal shelter, and he would like to implement a program to subsidize sterilization of dogs and cats in order to increase access to these services. He is in support of a statewide ban on cockfighting, legislation to regulate animal shelters and license euthanasia providers and he supports a measure to create a permanent funding source to ensure increased land and wildlife conservation. Baca especially wants to see criminal penalties implemented when people make money from gambling and breeding related to cockfighting.

Kevin Dixon—House district 20

Kevin Dixon was raised to treat animals as part of his family—his family dog, Franklin, appears on his campaign literature. Dixon pays attention to animals in need, stopping to help strays find their guardians or be taken to an animal shelter. He wants to see strong spay and neuter laws in New Mexico. Dixon supports a statewide ban on cockfighting, the creation of standards for animal shelters, euthanasia providers and other businesses that impact animals, like grooming parlors and pet shops, and the creation of a permanent funding source for land and wildlife

conservation. He believes that animals deserve to be treated humanely and with dignity in all circumstances, and that setting standards through regulation is an appropriate way to work toward that goal.

Incumbents:

Representative Gail Chasey—House district 18

Representative Chasey earned a 100% voting record in both 2005 and 2006. Chasey voted in favor of a ban on cyberhunting, increasing penalties for poaching wildlife, requiring bear-proof containers in bear country, providing for animal safety in disaster plans, a ban on cockfighting, requiring bitter antifreeze, and holding people responsible for their animals who pose a danger to the public. In addition, as Chair of the House Consumer and Public Affairs committee, she voted against expansion of canned hunting operations in the state, and as a member of the House Judiciary committee voted in favor of creating shelter standards through the Animal Sheltering Services Act.

Representative Manuel Herrera—House district 39

Representative Herrera earned a 100% voting record in both 2005 and 2006. Herrera voted in favor of a ban on cyberhunting, increasing penalties for poaching wildlife, requiring bear-proof containers in bear country, providing for animal safety in disaster plans, a ban on cockfighting, requiring bitter antifreeze, and holding people responsible for their animals who pose a danger to the public.

Representative Nick Salazar—House district 40

Representative Salazar earned an 88% average voting record for 2005 and 2006. Salazar voted in favor of a ban on cyberhunting, increasing penalties for poaching wildlife, requiring bear-proof containers in bear country, providing for animal safety in disaster plans, a ban on cockfighting, requiring bitter antifreeze, and holding people responsible for their animals who pose a danger to the public. In addition, as a member of the House Appropriations and Finance Committee, he voted against a bill that would have created an open season on New Mexico's cougars.

Representative Luciano "Lucky" Varela—House district 48

Representative Varela earned an 88% average voting record for 2005 and 2006. Varela voted in favor of a ban on cyberhunting, increasing penalties for poaching wildlife, requiring bear-proof containers in bear country, providing for animal safety in disaster plans, a ban on cockfighting, requiring bitter antifreeze, and holding people responsible for their animals who pose a danger to the public.

New Mexicans are increasingly concerned about animals and appreciate legislative leaders who value the role animals play in all our lives. Many citizens believe the government should play an active role in ensuring animals receive humane care and protection from cruelty and exploitation.

Animal Protection Voters is the political voice for people who care about animals and works to build political capital for animal advocacy across New Mexico.

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