



**Dear Animal Defender,**

June 2024

**Thank you for your generosity this month! As thoughts of summer vacation and fun in the sun occupy the minds of many, we appreciate that you always remember to support our work!**

## **2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION: PROGRESS AND SOME HEARTACHES**

The *Humane Society of Louisiana* works hard at our state capitol to pass new animal protection laws and to oppose legislation that would harm our fellow creatures. With your help, we'll keep working to make connections with our legislators and state powerbrokers, so that the concerns of Louisiana's animal defenders are taken seriously. Despite some setbacks, we're happy to report that we were able to pass several bills this year. Here are some highlights from this year's session:

We introduced and passed a bill to create a vanity license plate, which will raise needed funds for wildlife rehabilitators. Until now, these state-licensed volunteers have been funding all of their life saving work out of their own pockets.

We introduced and passed a bill creating the Louisiana Commemorative Pet Stamp, sales of which will fund spay/neuter programs. Long ago, we had an idea to create a 'pet stamp' which would raise for spay/neuter, in the same way that 'duck stamps' are used to raise funds for habitat conservation. Now it's a reality!

We testified on behalf of two pro-wildlife bills which became law this year. One will make the process easier for new wildlife rehab volunteers, by creating an online permitting course. The second allows animal rescuers to adopt animals of certain species, if approved by a veterinarian. This will help wild animals bonded to their carers, who cannot be returned to the wild.

Representative Delisha Boyd introduced - and we helped pass - a license plate bill to generate funding for the *Humane Society of Louisiana*. We were grateful and touched by her willingness to help our agency! Our intention is that funds raised by this plate will be used to support spay/neuter programs in underserved rural areas of our state.



*HSLA's Jeff Dorson, poses with pro-animal legislators and volunteers. From left to right, with Representative Delisha Boyd; Representative Lauren Ventrella and lobby volunteers; Representative Brett Geymann.*



HSLA is still working to secure public animal shelter funding, but so far, no major allocations have been made for this critical need. Meanwhile, the pet overpopulation crisis continues to rage across our state. Still, we haven't given up! We even met and spoke with the Secretary of the Department of Corrections, James Leblanc, who agreed to have inmates care for animals, if shelters are constructed on prison grounds. This sort of cost saving arrangement has been shown to work well in the past, so it is something we are pursuing. We'll continue to advocate for urgently needed funding for shelters, even in the off season. On one happy note, animal-friendly legislators, Representative Brett Geymann and Representative Troy Romero, secured \$100K and \$50K respectively, to improve animal shelters in their districts.

**To realistically make any significant progress for animal shelter funding in the current administration, we must get Governor Landry to get behind the idea.** We're asking Louisiana residents to contact the governor in a polite letter describing the crisis situation for homeless animals in our state. Politely urge the Governor to take action and to use part of the 700 million he withdrew from the state's 'Rainy Day Fund' to build more animal shelters at correctional facilities; this sort of program is a win-win for communities, residents, inmates and animals alike. You can contact him here:

**Governor Jeff Landry. Office of the Governor/ PO Box 94004. Baton Rouge. LA 70804**