

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 24, 2008

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

We would like to draw your attention to a new Philippine law which, if vigorously enforced, should render uneconomical the illegal, cruel, and unhygienic trade in dog meat. We believe this law deserves support from our government.

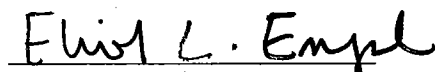
It is our understanding that, though the Philippines government banned the consumption of dog meat in 1998, the trade continued to thrive due to poor enforcement. The Philippines parliament, motivated by concern for the risk of rabies transmission, enacted the Anti-Rabies Act of 2007, which took effect on July 27, 2008. This law substantially increases the penalties for the commercial trade in dog meat. Whereas the minimum fine for a convicted dog meat trader used to be the equivalent of \$19, the new law raises it to the equivalent of \$100 per dog. In most cases involving the seizure of a truck load of dogs, the total fine will amount to approximately \$10,000.

The Humane Society of the United States and the Humane Society International have documented the cruelty of the dog-meat trade. Typically, traders steal companion dogs and round up stray dogs. Traders often force a can over the dogs' muzzles and tie their front legs behind their backs, and leave dogs in this condition for days in the blazing sun, without food or water, while they accumulate enough animals to fill their trucks. The traders cram the dogs into cages so tightly that they can barely breathe, and half the dogs often die en route to slaughterhouses, where the traders club the surviving dogs or cut their throats while they are conscious.

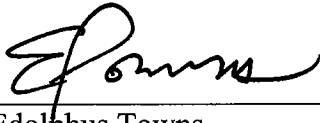
While we believe the 2007 legislation provides the foundation for permanently eradicating the dog-meat trade in the Philippines, international support will be critical to ensure effective enforcement. We request that you discuss with Philippine officials how the United States can assist in the enforcement of the Anti-Rabies Act, by police training or otherwise, and support their efforts to ensure the law's effectiveness.

We thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress


Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Edolphus Towns
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



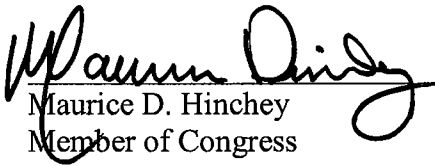
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



James P. Moran
Member of Congress



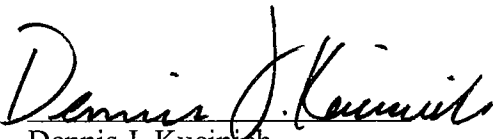
Thaddeus McCotter
Member of Congress



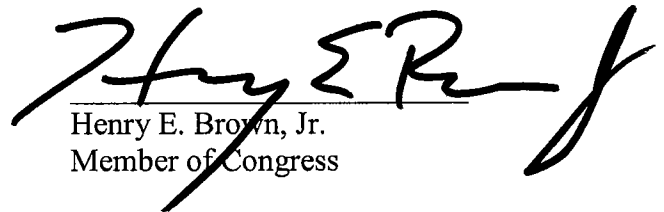
Maurice D. Hinchey
Member of Congress



Ellen O. Tauscher
Member of Congress



Dennis J. Kucinich
Member of Congress



Henry E. Brown, Jr.
Member of Congress