

New Jersey's "Nosey's Law" Bans Wild Animal Circus Acts

by Leonard S. dePalma, Esq.

New Jersey became the first state to ban the use of elephants and other wild or exotic animals in traveling animal acts when on Friday, December 14, 2018, Gov. Phil Murphy signed a bill, known as "Nosey's Law" authorizing the statewide ban, which would protect wild animals from being captured, imprisoned, and forced to endure dangerous spectacles for human's entertainment. Although other states have passed restrictions on wild animal acts, this is the first one to ban them completely.

According to onegreenplanet.org, "Nosey's Law" is named after a 36-year-old elephant who was rescued by animal rights groups and is now living in an animal refuge. Nosey's former handler, Hugo Liebel, caused outrage in 2015 when he took her to the New Jersey State Fair, as reported by peta.org. People were horrified to see this lonely, stressed, and painfully arthritic elephant plodding in circles day after day, and they called for the fair to stop the act. Raymond J. Lesniak, then a state senator, called on the New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife to investigate but realized that further measures were needed. So he introduced Nosey's Law in order to ban traveling elephant acts in the state—and the law has since been expanded to cover other wild and exotic animals as well.

"I am proud to sign 'Nosey's Law' and ensure that New Jersey will not allow wild and exotic animals to be exploited and cruelly treated within our state," Murphy said in a prepared statement. "These animals belong in their natural habitats or in wildlife sanctuaries, not in performances where their safety and the safety of others is at risk."

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Happy New Year!



  **out of order**

"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

- George Orwell

"To his dog, every man is a Napoleon; hence the constant popularity of dogs."

- Aldous Huxley

"Animals are such agreeable friends - they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms."

- George Eliot

Wild Animal Acts Banned

By New Legislation

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According to CNN, Illinois and New York have laws banning the use of elephants in traveling or entertainment acts. But Nosey's Law makes New Jersey the first state to outlaw the use of all wild and exotic animals in traveling acts.

Brian R. Hackett, the New Jersey state director for the Humane Society of the United States, celebrated the news. As reported by thehill.com: "New Jersey is the first state to protect wild animals from the abuses inherent in traveling shows," Hackett said in a statement included in the office's release.

The January 2018 Pocket Veto

In January, just before he left office, former Gov. Chris Christie declined to sign "Nosey's Law," which had passed the Senate unanimously and with only two dissenting votes in the General Assembly. Christie's pocket veto meant that the bill had to be approved from scratch under the Murphy administration.

As reported in nj.com, there were no loud roars of disapproval when the bill came up again in both chambers of the Democrat-controlled New Jersey Legislature in November 2018. It cleared the state Senate by a 36-0 vote and the state Assembly 71-3 with three abstentions.

Other states, including Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Hawaii and New York, are considering similar bans, according to one of the bill's sponsors (as reported by nj.com).

According to earth.com, Nosey's plight is similar to many other wild animals who are forced to perform for circus acts. Life in a circus act is far from a wild animal's natural habitat. The animals are exposed to long periods of traveling and confinement, inhumane handling and training practices and overwhelming stimuli such as circus lights and music. Circus animals are often trained using bull-hooks, whips and other tools in an attempt to "tame" them.

The stress of captivity and circus performances can manifest into dangerous animal attacks, reports earth.com. A simple internet search can show dozens of videos of circus animals lashing out during performances. A video of

jumping into the audience went viral just a few months ago, according to earth.com.

The audience frantically runs and screams as the ostrich falls to the ground, as reported by earth.com. One person was reportedly injured by the incident. In 2013, horrified circus goers in Mexico watched a tiger kill its trainer during a performance.



Sponsor of the bill, Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez said according to earth.com, "These beautiful creatures suffer from routine abuse and mistreatment by their handlers for the sake of entertainment. This by no means justifies the emotional and physical abuse animals like Nosey are forced to endure. Nosey is now safe in an animal sanctuary, but the law protects other animals from being abused like she was. Today, New Jersey is taking a stand for animal rights and I hope that other states will follow our example so that this sort of abuse can be eliminated everywhere in the country."