Equal Protection Under the Law?

OBJECTIVE

To understand the laws that protect animals and to realize the limitations and potential that exists for these laws. Students will also compare the differences and similarities between laws that protect animals and those that protect people.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Students will hear from a Dumb Friends League Animal Cruelty Investigator, who will discuss laws that protect animals in Colorado. They'll also hear from a speaker who will discuss laws that protect people. Students will compare the laws and modify them or create laws they feel could better protect animals.

MATERIALS

🐾 Materials for visual aids

ACTIVITY

Preliminary Discussion

🐾 Why do animals need laws to protect them?

🐾 What types of laws do you think are needed?

🐾 Do animals and people need similar or different laws to protect them? Why?

🐾 When were the first animal protection laws enacted in this country? What were the events that lead up to this?

🐾 When were the first laws to protect people enacted? What were the events that lead up to this?

Procedure

Contact the Humane Education Program at the Dumb Friends League at 303-696-4941, Ext. 398, to schedule a presentation by a Cruelty Investigator. The Investigator will discuss investigating reports of animal cruelty and abuse and the state laws that protect companion animals in Colorado. Ask the Investigator to discuss what kinds of laws and penalties the Dumb Friends League would like to see enacted to help protect animals better.

Invite an attorney, social worker or legislator to speak to the class about laws that protect people. Ask this speaker to discuss what kinds of laws and penalties he/she would like to see enacted to help protect people better. Compare these laws to the ones that protect animals. Who's receiving more protection under the law? Why do you think this is the case?

After the presentation, the class will discuss the kinds of laws and penalties they would like to see enacted in the future, which would serve to protect animals more effectively. Students should now divide into four groups. Each group should choose a new law to create or a current law to modify. They should consider the impact it would have on the animals and what type of education would be necessary to inform the public about the need for this law. Students may need to do more research on current laws.

Each group will then present their law to the rest of the class in the form of a persuasive explanation. The groups should be prepared to persuade their audience on the need for this law and why their support is necessary. They should create visual aids to use for their presentation.

Post-Discussion

🐾 What do you think are the limitations of the laws that protect animals? Are there limitations of laws that protect people?

❖ How can you support laws that will serve to protect animals more effectively?

❖ What are the obstacles that lie in the way of more effective laws and stricter penalties for animal cruelty cases?

❖ What states have stricter laws than Colorado for animal cruelty? How and why did these states enact these laws?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Have the students conduct a letter writing campaign to their local legislators, to encourage them to support laws that protect animals.