

Dear Attorney General Holder,

On September 5, 2014, United States Senator James Inhofe held a political fundraiser that we believe violated multiple state and federal laws.

The fundraiser had a number of parts. The location of the registration, socializing and dinner was the Quartz Mountain Lodge in Lone Wolf, Oklahoma. An integral part of the fundraiser, however, was an "Old World" Pigeon Shoot" (Please see **Exhibit A**) that occurred a few miles from the lodge, on land that we believe is owned by the federal government.

At the pigeon shoot, 1,000 birds, many who were tame and had bands on them, were hand thrown into the air and shot as living targets by Senator Inhofe and attendees of Senator Inhofe's fundraiser.

An investigator from my organization, SHowing Animals Respect and Kindness (SHARK), paid for his own ticket to the event and legally video and audio recorded the animal cruelty as well as statements made by Inhofe staff. Based on the evidence we recorded at the fundraiser, and what we have uncovered since then, we are presenting the following concerns that we ask your department to investigate.

- The acts of cruelty committed at the pigeon shoot clearly violated Oklahoma State law §1685, §1686 and §1691 (**Exhibit B**).
- Employees of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation attended and worked at the political fundraiser, part of which occurred on federal land. Please see **Exhibit C** for the full, detailed statement on this issue.
- Kiowa County Sheriff officers were present and provided security for the pigeon shoot.

In *The Oklahoman*, Rusty Appleton, Senator Inhofe's campaign manager, was quoted about this: <http://newsok.com/inhofe-fundraiser-event-causes-flap/article/5344952/?page=2>

"The campaign paid off-duty sheriff's employees to work security, he said."

We are concerned that the campaign may not have followed the law to its full extent in hiring and reimbursing of the off-duty officers, especially as they were using their government vehicles for the event. We are not even sure if the officers were off-duty or

not for this event. We ask that this issue be investigated to make sure the law was fully complied with.

- One of the attendees of the fundraiser and pigeon shoot was Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, Bill John Baker. Baker's step-son, Bryan Robertson, claimed in a post on Facebook that the pigeons were captured in Houston, Texas (**Exhibit D**).

In that same article in *The Oklahoman*, Rusty Appleton was asked about the pigeons.

"Appleton said the Inhofe campaign paid a contractor to 'trap the birds humanely' and kept the pigeons in the shade and watered them in the time leading up to the shoot."

Capturing the pigeons in Texas and transporting them to Oklahoma makes this an interstate commerce issue. That raises concerns over the procurement of these animals and if the proper taxes have been paid by the Inhofe campaign and the person who trapped them.

Pigeon shoots tend to exist in an underground economy where there are no records kept or taxes paid. However, Mr. Appleton's statement means that there should be specific records kept and we therefore request that be investigated.

In addition, according to the *"Health Requirements Governing the Admission of Animals,"* published by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (<http://digitalprairie.ok.gov/cdm/ref/collection/stgovpub/id/310051>), a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection was needed for the pigeons within 30 days of entry into Oklahoma, which included an Individual ID for each animal.

We do not believe this occurred and that the Inhofe campaign may have violated the law for the importation of animals into Oklahoma and across state lines.

- Our best research shows that the land that was used for the live pigeon shoot is owned by the US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, and is managed by the Lugert-Altus Irrigation District.

Tom Buchanan serves as General Manager of the Lugert-Altus Irrigation District. He is also the Secretary of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board. Mr. Buchanan was present at the pigeon shoot and was filmed working at it; he was holding a live bird and appeared to be about to throw the bird into the air to be shot by the attendees of the

fundraiser. In 2008, Mr. Buchanan donated \$250 to Senator Inhofe's campaign, so he has shown to be a supporter of the Senator's electoral ambitions.

There are serious questions about why this federally owned land was being used not just for a pigeon shoot, but for a political fundraiser for Senator Inhofe, who, it must be noted, got, "\$5,000,000 for water related infrastructure improvement projects at the Lugert-Altus Irrigation District, Altus, Oklahoma." <http://www.inhofe.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/inhofe-successfully-leads-effort-to-enact-wrda>

We ask you to investigate Mr. Buchanan's role in the fundraiser, as he may have abused his power to allow an electioneering event to be held on the federally owned land he manages.

While some of the concerns we have presented are related to state law, we believe the Justice Department has a vital role to play as the local authorities are refusing to take any action.

We have made multiple attempts to contact the authorities in Oklahoma, including the Kiowa County Sheriff's Department as well the Assistant District Attorney that covers the area where the shoot took place. That ADA instructed his receptionist to tell us that he would not speak to us and that we should contact his supervisor, District Attorney John Wampler. We faxed and called DA Wampler and the Sheriff's department but they have so far refused to return or any of our messages. We've also reached out to the Department of Wildlife Conservation and heard nothing back. Elected officials both Democrat and Republican have refused to respond.

We believe that these authorities will do nothing to investigate the serious issues we have presented to them. This is not speculation; the aforementioned Rusty Appleton, Inhofe's campaign manager, was recorded on audio stating that explicitly.

Prior to the fundraiser, PETA had complained to the District Attorney and Sheriff's office about the pigeon shoot. Mr. Appleton told some attendees of the pigeon shoot the following:

*"But ah, but this year, is the first year that PETA like, um PETA called the District Attorney and the Sheriff on us for doing this. **And of course nobody cared. Nobody is doing anything about it.**"*

Senator Inhofe is a powerful politician. When presented with a potential violation of the law by Senator Inhofe's campaign, the local authorities chose to do nothing.

Bear in mind that the same sheriff's department that is supposed to have enforced the law was, according to Mr. Appleton, being paid by the campaign for security.

Powerful politicians need to be held accountable under the law for their actions. When local and state authorities fail, we turn to the Federal Government to keep the law from being rendered meaningless.

Sincerely,

Steve Hindi
President, SHowing Animals Respect and Kindness