

**The Honorable Representative**

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**The Honorable Senators**

The U.S. Senate, U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representative and Senators:

I am very happy the House of Representatives passed the Captive Primate Safety Act (H.R. 80) with a majority vote of 323-95. Perhaps the widely publicized chimp attack in Stamford, Connecticut influenced this swift decision to ban interstate and foreign traffic in primates as “pets.”

I now strongly urge my Senators to cosponsor and support similar legislation to debilitate the primate “pet” trade.

Headlines nationwide focused on Travis the chimpanzee's vicious attack on Charla Nash, a friend visiting Sandra Herold's Stamford, CT home on February 16, 2009. As Nash exited her car, Herold's "pet" chimp Travis, 15, tore the woman's face. Nash lost a lot of blood and may be permanently disfigured.

To save her friend's life, Herold stabbed Travis repeatedly and beat him with a shovel. Officers at the scene finished the 200-pound chimp off with a gun. Once shot, Travis retreated to the only place he knew — a human place with toys and blankets. Bewildered and bleeding, he awaited his next command. But no voice came and Travis died.

The most predictable thing about Travis was his unpredictability. Like all nonhuman primates, Travis was a creature of the jungle. Not a TV celebrity. Not someone's child. Travis was programmed to vie for leadership in his pack as he matured. He was wired to act aggressively in the wild.

An estimated 15,000 primates live in private settings in the U.S. State laws are sketchy — some ban all exotics; others permit primates. The thriving traffic in monkeys and apes poses a public health risk as well, since primates can transmit Herpes B virus, yellow fever, and monkeypox,

Baby primates can grow into belligerent, even hostile, “pets.” Some caretakers cage, drug and/or defang them. Others dump primates at roadside zoos or sell them to breeders. Since accredited zoos refuse them and most respectable sanctuaries are full, few options exist for these former “pets.”

I thank the House for its quick action. I now ask my Senators to do everything possible to pass the Captive Primate Safety Act this year.

Thank you,