



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS SKYPE PRESENTATION

"Unpublished insights into *United States v. Stevens*"

Presented by Professor Henry Mark Holzer
Chairman, International Society for Animal Rights

Last week ISAR extended an invitation to our supporters to join us for a fifteen minute Skype presentation entitled "Unpublished insights into *United States v. Stevens*" with ISAR's Chairman Professor Henry Mark Holzer.

In case you missed it, we are resending the details of our presentation. We encourage you to forward this information along to everyone in your email contact list and ask them to do the same.

But first, we would like to offer an excerpt from ISAR's blog titled [Free Speech and Cruelty to Animals](#) posted on January 12, 2009:

"...Now, another case is headed for the Supreme Court which also raises First Amendment (speech) and animal rights (cruelty) issues.

A 1999 federal law made it a crime to "create, sell, or possess" depictions of illegal cruelty to animals, especially so-called "[crush videos](#)," the nature of which I leave to the reader's imagination.

It's important to understand that the law did not criminalize the illegal cruelty itself, which was and is a crime under the laws of all fifty states. It criminalized, in essence, dissemination of the depictions of illegal cruelty. To the extent that dissemination of videos, DVDs, movies, books, magazines and other graphic materials are exercises of speech (and often press) rights, the federal felony statute seemingly created another exception to First Amendment protections.

A legal search of the home of a Virginia man, Robert J. Stevens, turned up three videos depicting illegal cruelty to animals which were introduced, narrated and commented on by him, together with accompanying printed material of which he was the author.

Stevens was indicted on three counts of violating the statute, convicted, and sentenced to 37 months in prison and three years of supervised release.

On appeal, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit (in a 10-3 vote) ruled the law to be an unconstitutional abridgment of Steven's First Amendment right of free speech, and threw out his conviction."

Supporters of ISAR know that we've filed an *amicus curiae* brief in the United States Supreme Court in the First Amendment/Animal Rights case of *United States v. Stevens* (see [ISAR's Amicus Curiae Brief Has Been Filed In The Supreme Court](#), [ISAR Amicus Curiae Brief in U.S. v. Stevens](#), [ISAR In The Supreme Court Of The United States](#), [Free Speech and Cruelty to Animals](#)).

In our most recent posting about the *Stevens* case, [Animals in Court](#), we provided a list of, and links to, the briefs of the parties -- the government, and Stevens -- and those individuals and organizations who have filed *amicus curiae* briefs, and we encouraged our supporters to review the Tables of Contents to see which *amici* are making what arguments.

Here's an update. Nine justices will hear oral argument in the *Stevens* case on October 6, 2009, one of them, Sonia Sotomayor, having

been only recently appointed to the Court.

The question is: who's going to win the case?

Will it be the government, if the Court upholds the statute making it a federal felony to create, possess or sell depictions of cruelty to animals?

Or will it be Stevens, who was convicted of violating the law, if the Court strikes down the statute as a violation of his First Amendment rights?

Utilizing the facilities of Skype, ISAR will present (at no charge to listeners) an analysis by Professor Henry Mark Holzer of the possible outcome of the *Stevens* case. He will focus on what can be expected of each justice in light of Supreme Court precedent, their own philosophies, and the nature of the case.

On September 30, 2009, Professor Holzer's fifteen minute presentation entitled "Unpublished insights into *United States v. Stevens*" will take place at 1:00PM *Eastern Standard Time*. Immediately following this presentation, Professor Holzer will take a few minutes to answer questions relating to the *United States v. Stevens* case.

To sign up for this skype presentation, be sure to add username ColleenGedrich to your Skype contact list.

On September 30, 2009, ISAR will contact interested individuals by initiating a Skype-to-Skype call at 1:00PM *Eastern Standard Time*. If you do not have a Skype account (which is free), please visit www.skype.com to sign up.

Please note: this presentation will be recorded.

For a preview of ISAR's presentation "Unpublished insights into *United States v. Stevens*" click [here](#).

As a follow-up to "Unpublished insights into *United States v. Stevens*," ISAR will welcome back Professor Holzer (and interested Skype members) on Thursday, October 8, 2009 at 1:00PM *Eastern Standard*

Time for his commentary and critique on the oral arguments in the Supreme Court two days earlier.