

Richard Burden MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

George Eustice MP
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

22 February 2016

A large number of my constituents have written to me recently about the welfare of circus animals.

As you are no doubt aware, this issue has been prominently campaigned on in recent years. Though the numbers of circus animals are, laudably, now very low, I am sure you will agree that this does not mean we can afford to be inactive. The UK has a good record on animal welfare and I do not want us to fall behind our international partners on this. An impressive number of countries have all committed to ban wild animals in circuses. The UK should be one of them.

The prime minister has promised to outlaw this “outdated practice” and it was a manifesto commitment of the Conservative Party. As such, there is a clear mandate accompanied by public support and charitable sector advocacy. The most important, and only, step left is government action in the form of a bill.

Efforts to pass backbench bills on this have been blocked at every stage, despite the best efforts of Jim Fitzpatrick and other Members in the last Parliament. The Wild Animals in Circuses (Prohibition) Bill was recently read the first time and is due Second Reading on 4th March. In the likely event that it is objected to, will the government ensure they introduce their own form of a bill in this Parliament? Further, is your Department currently consulting on this issue in the aim of introducing measures?

I would appreciate if you could address these concerns so that I can share your response with my constituents.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Richard Burden'.

Richard Burden MP

Labour Member of Parliament for Birmingham Northfield

www.richardburden.com Email: richard.burden.mp@parliament.uk Tele: 0207 219 2318