



Animal rights activists call to ban horse-drawn carriages and stand up for free speech

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Horse-drawn carriages seem like little more than a harmless tourist attraction to the average passerby. What we tend to forget is that these horses never get to do what they want. They don't get to take a break if they want, or eat when they want, or drink when they want, or even run when they want. No. These horses are essentially slave labor, forced to stand for long periods of time until some family decides they need to take a break from walking and need a horse to pull them around.

There are several carriage companies that operate in the city of Philadelphia and they are all guilty of animal exploitation. The treatment of the horses is really of no relevance in this situation. No matter how "humane" the treatment, the fact is that these horses are forced to do this line of work. They don't get a choice. Horses in the carriage business are completely at the mercy of the industry.

One group with a local chapter, Friends of Animals, has decided enough is enough. Over the past couple of months, they have been calling for a flat out ban on horse-drawn carriages. They've been talking to locals, who largely support the ban, and doing peaceful demonstrations to raise awareness to the issue. During a recent demonstration though, freedom of speech has been put to the test.

While the demonstrators were standing on a public sidewalk exercising their right to peaceful demonstration, officials asked them vacate the space and move to the opposite side of the street.

The area of the sidewalk that the demonstrators were asked to leave was the same place where the for-profit carriage companies were lined up with their horses attempting to lure in passengers. The carriages were not asked to leave.

While the demonstrators were permitted to congregate on the opposite side of the street,

the move greatly reduced the effectiveness of their efforts as they were now a considerable distance from the carriages themselves.

This type of response, officials seemingly acting on behalf of the profit-driven animal exploitations, has become increasingly more common. With the current passage of legislation, such as the [Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act](#), one can begin to ponder why the government is becoming increasingly hostile toward animal activists. This is not to assert that there is any relation with this specific circumstance, but it does lead you to wonder.

The activists in this case were clearly doing nothing more than exercising their right to free speech and luckily the [ACLU](#) has stepped in to investigate the situation. Even in light of this drawback, Friends of Animals and the activists committed to banning horse-drawn carriages in

Philadelphia are not backing down. They need your help and support to spread the word that horses serve no place in Philadelphia streets.

What can you do to help?

1. Avoid horse-drawn vehicles and tell everyone you know why they should never take a ride in a horse-drawn carriage.
2. Contact Mayor Michael Nutter at 215-686-2181 or [contact him online](#). If you are a Philadelphia resident, please [contact your City Council member](#), and ask them to support legislation that will ban horse-drawn carriages.
3. [Volunteer to join the Friends of Animals campaign](#) or donate to help ensure that the horses who have been exploited by the carriage industry can live out their lives in sanctuaries.
4. [Sign the Friends of Animals petition!](#)

It's only a matter of time until we abolish this exploitative industry and with your help, it will happen even faster!

For more info: Visit www.foaphilly.org to [learn more about ending horse-drawn carriages in Philadelphia](#).

Watch **Blinders**, a full-length documentary about horse-drawn carriages: