

Understanding HumaneWatch

HumaneWatch describes itself as a non-profit watchdog group that informs the public about activist groups, supported by American consumers. Here's the truth.

1. HumaneWatch is not a watchdog group.

HumaneWatch is a creation of Richard Berman, a Washington D.C. lobbyist infamous for his false and misleading smear campaigns against public interest groups.

Through his front group, the deceptively named *Center for Consumer Freedom* (CCF), Berman has attacked Mothers Against Drunk Driving (fighting against blood alcohol limits on behalf of the liquor industry), the Center for Disease Control (downplaying the hazards of mercury on behalf of the seafood industry), and the Center for Science in the Public Interest (downplaying the dangers of trans-fats and obesity on behalf of the fast food industry).

2. HumaneWatch is a for-profit company masquerading as a charity.

The IRS requires non-profit organizations to disclose their finances, and have restrictions on the activities they can conduct.

HumaneWatch is organized as a non-profit, 501(c)(3) corporation. However, in 2008, this "non-profit" funneled 92% of its multi-million dollar corporate donations to Berman's privately owned PR firm, Berman & Company.

By diverting money to his private company, Berman skirts the transparency requirements for non-profits. He exploits this loophole in tax law, pretending to be a "non-profit" while reaping millions in tax-exempt corporate donations for his personal benefit.

3. HumaneWatch is not supported by consumers.

A corporation that attacked a charity would face a massive retaliation by an outraged public. But by using Richard Berman's phony non-profits as a hired gun, disreputable corporations can attack public interest groups anonymously.

Berman refuses to disclose what corporations pay him, or in what amounts, but his groups have been linked to notorious animal abusers like Hunte Corporation, Monsanto, Tyson, and Ringling Bros.

4. HumaneWatch exists to harass animal protection charities.

In an interview with Chain Leader magazine, Richard Berman described his strategy for destroying animal protection groups: "Our offensive strategy is to shoot the messenger... We've got to attack their credibility as spokespersons. We always have a knife in our teeth."

HumaneWatch engages in a daily campaign of harassment, encouraging its supporters to intimidate donors, file meritless IRS complaints, and disrupt charity events that benefit animals.

5. HumaneWatch demonizes vegans.

HumaneWatch routinely portrays vegans as wild-eyed, radical terrorists out to destroy animal agriculture and force their will on the rest of America. They encourage an atmosphere of hatred, intolerance, and hysteria towards vegans and vegan organizations in order to curry favor with restaurants, ranchers and meat-packing industries.

6. HumaneWatch deceives with junk science and phony sources.

CCF's "Director of Research" is David Martosko. He has a background in opera, a short career as an AM radio talk show producer, and no scientific training whatsoever. This is the individual who decides whether the science CCF relies on is valid.

HumaneWatch supports its false claims with discredited science and testimonials from fanatical anti-animal spokespersons. When it can't find information that gives the appearance of supporting their outlandish claims, it publishes its own "studies" under another name, and cites those names as if they were independent sources.

The Center for Consumer Freedom, ActivistCash.com, HumaneWatch, and PETA Kills Animals.com and more than 100 other websites and organizations comprise Richard Berman's misinformation campaign. They frequently cite each other to give the illusion of having independent evidence for their claims.

7. HumaneWatch lies.

HumaneWatch regurgitates an endless stream of misinformation on its blogs and websites. Most of the information provided is in the form of innuendo and cherry-picked facts designed to mislead readers, with a dash of conspiracy theory and scaremongering thrown in for good measure... But when innuendo and scare tactics fail, they resort to outright lies.

HumaneWatch was forced to issue a retraction when they falsely accused the Humane Society of the United States of funding international terrorism.

When HumaneWatch duped a WSB-TV reporter with false information claiming that HSUS had not accounted for funds raised in the Hurricane Katrina rescue efforts, the station immediately retracted the story and filed an angry cease-and-desist letter against Berman. HumaneWatch continues to cite the story as proof of their claims – despite the fact that it was based on their misinformation! They've even resorted to linking to illegal copies of the broadcast on an Iranian file-sharing site.

HumaneWatch continually promotes the ridiculous claim that animal protection groups are extremists who secretly want to outlaw animals as pets or livestock. They hope to destroy the organizations that expose cruel and unhealthy practices so that corporations who profit from animal cruelty can do so unhindered.

Stop the attack on animal welfare!

www.HumaneWatch.info www.BermanExposed.org