

## The Humane Society of the United States Addresses the Pet Poverty Crisis



President and CEO of the Humane Society of the United States, Kitty Block, Discusses its New 'More Than a Pet' Campaign and the Pet Poverty Crisis in the United States

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Most people are aware of how poverty and structural inequality create challenges and barriers to accessing healthy food, education, jobs, health care and housing and how inflation is only making the crisis worse. Pet resources are no different. Many families are struggling to afford and access veterinary care, food and supplies for their beloved pets. More than 20 million pets live in poverty - three times as many pets live in poverty as enter shelters every year. This is a long overlooked national crisis exacerbated by inflation and the economy.

Recently, Kitty Block, President and CEO of the Humane Society of the United States, participated in a nationwide satellite media tour to discuss the launch of the More Than a Pet campaign and how the organization is addressing the crisis.

A video accompanying this announcement is available at:

<https://youtu.be/GdaZXktSjNI>



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Over the past 20 years, the Humane Society of the United States has helped half a million pets and their families by providing veterinary care and supplies at no cost, keeping families and pets together in over 50 communities across the U.S. Without these services, families are often forced to make choices about sacrificing their own needs, even food and medications for themselves, to prioritize care for their pet. No family should ever have to make that choice.

Since 2002, the Humane Society of United States' **Pets for Life** and **Rural Area Veterinary Services** programs have been helping pet owners across the U.S. by providing food, supplies and services for their cats and dogs at no cost. It is critical to close the gap that exists for people and pets in underserved areas.

With the new campaign called "More Than a Pet," the HSUS is sounding an alarm about this crisis that is only getting worse. The Humane Society of the United States **is offering these tips for people to support their communities:**

- Advocate for keeping pets and their people together **by signing the HSUS petition** to close the pet equity gap. Your voice can make a big impact for all animals.
- Volunteer with the Humane Society of the United States' **Pets for Life** and **Rural Area Veterinary Services** programs, which increase access to pet care for underserved communities.
- Donate pet food to your local shelter or pet food pantry.
- If you know of a neighbor in need, offer to help drive them to a veterinary appointment, foster their pet temporarily or provide a bag of their pet's favorite food to help close the access to pet care gap.
- The HSUS is inviting the public to show their support for this campaign by sharing why their animal companion is **#MoreThanAPet** to them, at **humanesociety.org/morethanapet**. Campaign partner **Smalls** is donating a bowl of food for every photo shared, up to \$1M, to pets and their families in need.

## **Learn More and Get Involved**

### **About Kitty Block**

Kitty Block is the chief executive officer and president of the Humane Society of the United States and also chief executive officer of **Humane Society International**. She leads the nation's most effective animal protection organization in the fight for **all**

**animals.** Block was named president and CEO of the **Humane Society of the United States** in January 2019, becoming the first woman to hold the position in the organization's history. Block first joined the HSUS as a legal investigator in 1992 and was instrumental in bringing cruelties such as horse slaughter and the killing of dogs and cats for their fur in China to light. She led the HSUS's efforts to secure protections for dolphins with successful litigation and landmark dolphin-safe tuna legislation. In addition, she was one of the architects of a successful lawsuit over commercial whaling brought against Japan by Australia in the International Court of Justice.

She has served as an adviser to the White House on trade and the environment, and she has served multiple elected terms on the International Dolphin Conservation Agreement International Review Panel, which works with governments on monitoring violations of the agreement. Block received a law degree from The George Washington University in 1990 and a bachelor's degree in communications and philosophy from the University of New Hampshire in 1986. She is a lifelong animal lover who helped her mother rescue and care for pets and other animals in need as a child. Block lives in Washington, D.C., with her husband and daughter, their street dog rescue, Lilly, and rescue cats, Misti and Storm

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