

# Supreme Court Rejects Meat Industry Challenge to Animal Cruelty Law

## *Ruling Affirms Dismissal of Lawsuit Over California Proposition 12*

*May 11, 2023, Washington, D.C.* – Today, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against a meat industry challenge to California law Proposition 12, which bans extreme confinement in animal agriculture in California, as well as the sale in California of products derived from these practices. The law passed in a bipartisan, landslide victory, with over 60% of the vote. The pork industry has challenged Proposition 12 in four separate lawsuits. Every court to consider each of the cases, at both the trial and appellate level, has ruled against the industry. Today’s Supreme Court ruling is the industry’s latest in that string of losses. Animal Outlook is among a group of animal advocacy organizations that intervened as a defendant in the case to support California in defending Proposition 12.

“No matter how cruel or painful a practice is, the animal agriculture industry has fought against laws to prohibit it—in this case, all the way to the Supreme Court,” said Cheryl Leahy, Executive Director at Animal Outlook. “When a powerful industry will stop at nothing to make complicity in cruelty mandatory, it’s a clear sign that the cruelty is part and parcel of that industry, and the only way to refuse to be a part of it is to not eat animals altogether.”

Proposition 12 sets minimum space requirements for egg-laying hens, mother pigs, and baby cows raised for veal in California, such that these animals cannot be confined in the industry-standard cages, which are barely bigger than their bodies. Prop 12 also requires that any eggs, pork, or veal sold in the state comply with these space requirements, regardless of where those products were produced. The lawsuit before the Supreme Court challenged the latter aspect of the law, arguing that out-of-state pork producers should be able to sell pig products in California without complying with Prop 12’s space requirements. The case was thrown out by two lower courts, dismissals that were affirmed in today’s Supreme Court ruling.

Prop 12 was enacted directly by voters in a California ballot proposition, in a landslide victory, with nearly 63 percent of the vote. Supporters ranged widely and included the Humane Society of the United States, the United Farm Workers, the National Black Farmers Association, the California Council of Churches, and the Consumer Federation of America. [Recent surveys](#) have reported that 80% of voters across party lines nationwide support the protections provided by Prop 12 and would welcome laws providing such protections in their home state.

The case is [\*National Pork Producers Council \(NPPC\) v. Ross\*](#). Animal Outlook has also [previously conducted undercover investigations](#) that have documented the intense suffering caused by pork industry practices, including gestation crates—immobilizing smart, social, curious animals in barren metal crates barely wider than their bodies, for months on end. [Read more about gestation crates and the pig industry here.](#)

## **ABOUT ANIMAL OUTLOOK**

[Animal Outlook](#) is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) animal advocacy organization based in Washington, DC, and Los Angeles, CA. It is strategically challenging animal agribusiness through undercover investigations, legal advocacy, corporate and food system reform, and disseminating information about the many harms of animal agriculture, empowering everyone to choose vegan. <https://animaloutlook.org/>

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