

Do lawmakers really listen to their constituents?

Questions on the SPCA Tampa Bay funding continues to grow

On June 2, 2026 State Representative [Kimberly Berfield](#) of District 58 announced on **Facebook** the appropriation request (line item #2) of \$484,500 to the SPCA Tampa Bay (SPCATB) for "Shelter Safety and Preparedness".



Animal advocates and constituents reached out to Representative Berfield sharing with her information about the agency of which she was likely not aware: SPCATB's reckless behavior and spending: \$1,085,000 administrative salaries and compensation, fund raising expenses in excess of \$1.5M, \$94,247 "consulting fees" to St. Petersburg City Councilor Gina Driscoll, commercial breeder (puppy mill) advocacy and partnership, the pending animal cruelty trial on July 29th and the list goes on.

[Representative Berfield's response?](#)

UPDATE: I heard you, I listened, and I took your voices to the Governor's office. The SPCA Tampa Bay was the only shelter that contacted the district office asking for appropriations this year. However, after reading emails, Facebook messages and posts, and listening to voicemails, I personally contacted the Governor's office and requested that a line item veto be made to the appropriations regarding the organization. This is how government works - elected officials representing the voices of their district. I appreciate the time and energy of those who contacted me to make their voices heard and their concerns known. We collectively can only achieve better things if we communicate, so thank you!

This is true representation! This is leadership at its best. Representative Berfield is a gift to the tax payer of district 58.

Hopefully, if the request to veto the line item is successful, \$484,500 of YOUR tax dollars will not fall into the hands of an agency that has \$10M in assets, excessive administrative salaries and compensation. This is an agency that is to appear in court on July 29th on animal cruelty charges for letting the pig "Waddles" roast in the sun without the benefit of even a tarp during 10 days of relentless sun exposure and sweltering temperatures in July of 2025.



How did we get here?

The request for an appropriation of tax dollars for a 501(c)3 involves having both a house and senate sponsor. Navigating this process can be daunting and small organizations generally don't have the resources to pursue this process. What does an organization with \$10M in assets do? It hires a lobbyist (e.g. [Corcoran Partners](#)) in Tallahassee to submit its grant requests.

In 2024 the SPCA Tampa Bay paid \$57,315 in lobbying costs to get its appropriations requests to lawmakers. Lawmakers are busy and researching the integrity of an appropriation applicant may not be a priority for their staff. But it should be.

Here is how this works, or...this is how you are separated from your money twice.

The SPCATB uses (your) donor dollars to pay a lobbyist (that is also an SPCATB corporate sponsor) to get (your) tax payer's money via an appropriations request for any reason that looks attractive on its application. In this request, it is for "Shelter Safety and Preparedness" to fund a new perimeter security fence around 10 acres and generator to improve shelter "safety and resilience".

It's a troubling pattern: both donors and taxpayers are effectively funding the same outcome twice, while SPCA Tampa Bay administrators secure another year of self-enrichment and a sponsor/lobbyist is rewarded.

In the meantime, animal services atrophy despite SPCATB website claiming otherwise. The agency lists 7 services on its website. Only 2 are actually managed by the agency, "Surrender a Pet" and "Wildlife Assistance". The other 5 are referrals to either city-controlled programs or outside businesses.

Thank you, State Representative Kimberly Berfield, for being a public servant with rectitude.

If you would like to personally thank Representative Kimberly Berfield, she can be reached at Kim.berfield@FLHouse.gov or +1 (727) 351-8820.

101 Central Park Dr Largo, FL 33771 United States

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