



Rutinel Advocates for Trojan Horse Activity to Push the Animal Rights Ideological Agenda

Manny Rutinel's October 2024 appearance at the Animal Legal Defense Fund Student Convention revealed that he supports Trojan Horse activity to expand influence in animal advocacy, which involves entering government agencies, corporations, law firms, and politics. He described animal advocacy as "the movement," spoke of "our values," urged students to pursue careers outside traditional animal organizations, and introduced "counterfactual impact," emphasizing activists could do more by embedding movement values into powerful institutions than working in nonprofits.

A Career Built Within "The Movement"

Rutinel told students that his role as a Humane League campus coordinator strengthened his identity within the animal rights ideological agenda, which he called "the movement." Word choice matters and referring to his decade-long involvement as a "movement" shows a deep emotional connection with his work. He emphasized the importance of relationships formed at conferences and through animal organizations, which could last throughout a career.

Rutinel's career exemplified this network, including The Humane League, the Humane Society of the United States, Mercy for Animals, Yale's animal law program, the Animal Legal Defense Fund, Brighter Green, Earthjustice, Climate Reform, teaching at the University of Denver, and elected office.

The 2024 convention was an animal law event, promoted by the ALDF as a chance for students to learn from field leaders. Rutinel was highlighted as a Colorado legislator, former Earthjustice attorney, and Climate Reform CEO.

The Theory of “Counterfactual Impact”

Rutinel challenged the idea that working directly for animal rights groups is the most effective way to implement the ideological agenda. He suggested there's a bigger opportunity working outside animal rights groups. He called this “counterfactual impact,” which is the difference an activist can make because of their specific role working in an industry they are trying to change. This is already happening in Colorado; for example, Governor Polis has appointed activists to Colorado Parks and Wildlife and Colorado's Department of Agriculture. The most glaring Colorado example was Polis' appointment of animal rights activist Ellen Kessler to the Colorado State Board of Veterinary Medicine.

“Expanding the Animal Rights Movement” by Embedding Activists Inside Government Agencies

Rutinel suggested expanding the animal rights “movement by embedding activists inside government agencies.” He offered the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a specific example. He said an animal rights activist working inside the EPA could bring knowledge of what he called “the environmental destruction that animal agriculture has imposed on the planet.” That perspective, he argued, would allow the employee to contribute to the movement from within the agency. Rutinel further described this as “expanding the movement by not taking up a position within the movement.”

The significance of that statement must not be overlooked by agricultural producers. Federal agencies are expected to administer statutes, evaluate evidence, and implement laws enacted by Congress. Career personnel may have personal beliefs, but government agencies must apply standards fairly, rather than using government authority to advance an ideological agenda. An example of this in Colorado is the Colorado Parks and Wildlife ignoring the recommendations of staff specialists and voting against them.

Rutinel openly encouraged fellow animal rights activists to view government employment as a means to bring the animal rights ideological agenda into institutions that regulate agriculture. What Rutinel is suggesting animal rights ideologues do can be termed ideological subversion, bureaucratic activism, administrative overreach, abuse of power, malfeasance in office, deep state activism, a fifth column, and could also be defined as a Hatch Act Violation.

Corporate America: Obtain Institutional Authority as a Trojan Horse

Rutinel applied the same subversive logic to the private sector. Later at the convention, he said that one of the most powerful positions an animal advocate could occupy might be chief executive of Tyson Foods. He argued that an advocate in that role could steer the company toward the direction the movement considered better. The point was not that the activist had to work for an animal rights organization. The point was to obtain institutional authority as a Trojan Horse.

According to Rutinel, Gaining Office Could Be Highly Impactful for the Animal Rights Ideological Agenda

When asked about running for office, Rutinel described campaigning as extremely difficult but potentially highly impactful for the animal rights ideological agenda. He identified “industrial animal agriculture” as an issue that receives little attention in conventional political advertising. He said that when elected officials who share the audience's values occupy public office, they can bring animal-related ideas to the table. Such officials, he explained, can recognize legislation that may “harm animals”, attempt to stop it, and propose measures addressing animals, workers, public health, and environmental justice.

It is important to note that these comments were made while Rutinel himself was serving as an elected official.

Rutinel Promotes the Long Game in Implementing the Animal Rights Ideological Agenda

Rutinel encouraged students to see themselves as part of a movement that could continue for many decades or even a century. He urged them to extend their timeline for measuring success and dedicate themselves to the process rather than becoming discouraged by individual outcomes.

That advice placed his career guidance within a broader long-term strategy. Advocates could work in nonprofits, but they could also become government employees, state or federal lawmakers, corporate executives, or private attorneys. Their shared values, the animal rights ideological agenda, rather than their employer's formal mission, would connect their work to the movement.

We Don't Believe a Thing Rutinel Says

Unsurprisingly, now that Manny Rutinel is vying for a seat in Congress, he says some of his views have changed, that he has developed a greater appreciation for ranchers, and that his views have somehow become "nuanced." Does he still believe animal activists should use Trojan Horse tactics and enter agencies such as the EPA to bring movement values into regulatory decisions? Does he still view elected office as a means of advancing an animal-focused cause that receives insufficient political attention? Does he still encourage activists to seek corporate power so they can redirect animal agriculture from within?

In reality, he claims he has essentially discarded an ideological agenda he has held since 2008, when he was 14. The facts show that Rutinel has been fully immersed in the animal rights ideological agenda for close to 20 years. After listening to him coach animal law students in 2024 about subversive tactics to implement their agenda, there is no way an intelligent person is going to believe that, in a few short months, he has suddenly changed his whole ethos.

Does Rutinel and his well-funded campaign, more than 50% of which comes from ActBlue, really expect Colorado voters to believe him?

Clips from the 2024 ALDF Student Convention are posted on our website, and we strongly encourage voters to view them.