

## Federal Lawsuit Targets North Carolina Ag-Gag Law

*Farm Forward Argues That the New Law Violates Constitutional Rights to Free Speech and Equal Protection*

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**Greensboro, NC** — Today Farm Forward joined a federal lawsuit to strike down North Carolina’s ag-gag law, which went into effect January 1 despite Governor McCrory’s veto. The law punishes whistleblowers for exposing animal abuse, human rights violations, and anything else that employers wish to hide from the public.

After defeating a similar law in Idaho, which violated both the First Amendment and the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution, Farm Forward’s General Counsel Michael McFadden says the group is ready to take on another challenge.

“This is the kind of law you’d expect in North Korea, not North Carolina,” says McFadden. “Ag-gag protects abusers and punishes citizens for exercising their right to free speech. These laws have no place in America.”

Farm Forward has long been a watchdog of the American food system, from its new project [BuyingPoultry](#), which lets consumers find higher-welfare poultry products and plant-based alternatives, to its in-depth assistance on the book and upcoming documentary film *Eating Animals*, which is being produced by Academy Award Winner Natalie Portman. Farm Forward also hosts a petition at [ag-gag.org](#) that has been signed by tens of thousands of people nationwide and remains a cornerstone of the movement to overturn ag-gag laws.

Farm Forward is part of a coalition of plaintiffs in this lawsuit that includes the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Animal Legal Defense Fund, Center for Food Safety, Farm Sanctuary, Food & Water Watch, Government Accountability Project, and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. The plaintiffs’ joint statement is as follows:

*North Carolina’s Anti-Sunshine Law seriously hinders North Carolinians’ ability to know the truth about misconduct, mistreatment and corruption happening in virtually every industry, including nursing homes, factory farms, financial institutions, daycare centers and more. It’s an extreme law forced on citizens over a governor’s veto by lawmakers who bowed to pressure from corporate lobbyists. This law blatantly violates citizens’ rights to free speech, a free press, and to petition their government, and violates the Equal Protection Clause. It places the safety of our families, our food supply, and animals at risk, and it attempts to bully and threaten those working for transparency, free speech and the public good. Our lawsuit is being brought for the sake of the health and safety of all citizens of North Carolina. We are confident the law will be found unconstitutional and that a victory in North Carolina will deter other state legislatures from repeating North Carolina’s mistake.*