HEC Fact Sheet on Senate Joint Resolution 14
Say "No" to the Factory Farm, Right to Harm Amendment

1. SJR 14 would amend the Indiana Constitution to create a fundamental right to "engage in diverse farming and ranching practices" such that "any law" that abridges the "right of farmers to employ or refuse to employ effective agricultural technology and livestock production practices" i.e., factory farming, would be deemed unconstitutional.

2. Despite this benign language, SJR 14 is not about protecting the right of traditional farmers but is, instead, aimed at eliminating the ability of Hoosiers to hold the corporate livestock industry accountable for the harm it causes to our environment, public health and safety, animal welfare, and economy.

3. Creating a special right just for commercial meat, dairy and poultry producers is dangerous. It will serve only to provide transnational conglomerates like Tyson, JBS, Smithfield, Cargill, and Monsanto with enhanced constitutional protection and legal immunities that will restrict the Indiana’s ability to protect the public health, safety and welfare from bad actors known to exist in the industry, as exist in all industries. This will have severe, adverse consequences for rural residents and local economic development by elevating the rights of corporate livestock producers over those of:

   - Cities, towns and counties seeking to protect the health or property values of their residents through well-accepted zoning practices and local ordinances;
   - Rural Hoosiers whose health or enjoyment of their property is threatened by a factory farm;
   - Locally owned businesses, such as restaurants, beauty salons, real estate agencies, hotels, marinas, and doctors’ offices, whose ability to conduct their business may be impaired by the presence of a factory farm.

4. There is no need to amend our state constitution in this way. Under established court precedent, we know that our sacred rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" already protect our right to economic freedom which includes: the right to acquire, use, transfer and dispose of private property; the right to seek employment wherever one pleases; to change employment at will; and to engage in any lawful economic activity. In other words, agribusiness already has the “right” to engage in the commercial production of meat, poultry, and dairy and that rights is, and should remain, equal to the rights of other people to engage in their chosen occupations, trades, industries, and professions.

Please contact your state lawmakers today and urge them to oppose SJR 14.