

CCF

From Page 1A

ad contended only \$1 out of every \$200 donated to the non-profit organization went to hands-on pet shelters.

"Meanwhile, this wealthy animals rights group socked away over \$2.5 million of American donations in its own pension plans," the ad claimed.

Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of HSUS, said in response that the ad was "unjustified and fraudulent."

Pacelle added that working with shelters is only a small part of what HSUS does for animals.

"The HSUS was founded to safeguard the interests of all animals — including pets, laboratory animals, wildlife and farm animals," Pacelle said in a blog posted Feb. 23 on the HSUS Web site. "We have been faithful to that mission ever since."

"What HSUS really is, is a richer version of PETA," Martosko said. "They are an animals rights group portraying itself as an animal welfare group in order to get money and lobbying power to influence policy to serve their agenda."

That agenda, according to Martosko, is to influence American culture toward bringing animals up to par with humans, regarding basic rights.

"If Americans are really trending toward veganism, wearing vinyl shoes, taking elephants out of the circus, banning rodeos and going without a cure for cancer because lab rats have rights — if that's where we are intellectually — then fine, we have all the freedom to choose that," Martosko said. "But we shouldn't be led around by the nose to those conclusions by a group with a phony posture about what it is and what it wants."

But Pacelle contends that it's really the CCF with the hidden agenda, claiming that the CCF is funded by farm and food organi-

zations out to discredit HSUS's efforts toward animal protection.

"The HSUS has the highest rating from charity watchdog groups, such as Charity Navigator and the Better Business Bureau," Pacelle said. "We were also named by Worth magazine as one of the top 10 most fiscally responsible charities in America."

"(CCF) is bothering us because, by threatening animal abuse, we are threatening their bottom line," Pacelle said.

"There's a lot of misrepresentation here," Martosko said. "If HSUS were forced to do a little truth-in-advertising, their \$100 million budget would shrink to about \$20 million."

JOBS

From Page 1

The jobs bill has been a source of tension between House and Senate Democrats.

"It's ridiculous that it's taken so long for the Senate to overcome indifference and obstruction to finally send a bill back to the House which represents just a fraction of what we need to do to help the unemployed," said House Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey, D-Wis. "But better late than never, and better something than nothing."

Across the Capitol, the Senate

is debating a far more costly measure to clean up a lot of unfinished business from last year. The \$100 billion-plus bill would extend unemployment assistance, revive a bevy of expired tax breaks, help states with soaring Medicaid costs and prevent doctors from having to absorb big cuts in Medicare payments. The popular initiatives are traditionally extended on a bipartisan basis for brief periods of time, which hides their long-term costs.

The Senate plans to act on the jobs bill after wrapping up the unfinished-business bill, which means it probably won't be sent to Obama until next week.

The jobs bill contains two

major provisions. First, it would exempt businesses hiring the unemployed from the 6.2 percent Social Security payroll tax through December and give them an additional \$1,000 credit if new workers stay on the job a full year. The Social Security trust fund would be reimbursed for the lost revenue.

Second, it would extend highway and mass transit programs through the end of the year and pump in \$20 billion in time for the spring construction season. The money would make up for lower-than-expected gasoline tax revenues.

Small businesses would continue to be able to write off equipment purchases as a busi-

ness expense. Much of the bill is financed by cracking down on offshore tax havens.

Several lawmakers in both parties criticized the payroll tax break, saying that it wouldn't do much to create jobs and that the bulk of it would go to employers for new hires that would be made anyway.

"It simply encourages conduct that would occur anyway," said Lloyd Doggett, D-Texas.

Rep. Steve LaTourette, R-Ohio, said he asked businessmen at town meetings in his Rust Belt district whether they would hire people based on the payroll tax holiday. "Nobody raised their hands," LaTourette said. "This is not going to create one job."

BUDGET

From Page 1A

anti-smoking efforts, a \$1 million cut in the state Tourism and State Development Department, and the reduction or elimination of various university programs.

The GOP proposal also calls for a 2 percent across-the-board cut, amounting to \$7 million, in all areas except K-12 education and Medicaid, the state-federal program that pays the medical bills of poor people.

The lawmakers' plan would cut \$4 million in excess personal services, explained as unfilled positions, and another \$4 million in spending on travel, equipment and supplies. Rounds said those two cuts would amount to across-the-board reductions because each agency would have to decide how to handle them.

Republicans said their plan would avoid layoffs, except for three people in a court program for drug offenses and 16 in an intensive program that helps convicts addicted to methamphetamine.

However, Rounds said the plan would cost more jobs because many of the proposed spending cuts would lead to reductions in programs and the people who work in them.

House Republican Leader Bob Faehn of Watertown said Republicans are trying to make the budget cuts fair so no part of state government is treated more harshly than another.

"These are difficult times. I believe it could be classified as a budget crisis," Faehn said.

The GOP plan also relies on \$6.5 million the state will receive from the federal government in a Medicaid adjustment and another \$11.5 million from reducing the size of tax refunds to large industrial projects. Rounds said he doubts the reduction in the tax refund project will bring in much more than about \$3.5 million.

Rounds said he believes the state should use some reserves because many people who have lost jobs during the recession need state help. Spending should not be cut at technical schools and universities because they have record enrollment that will lead to economic growth, he said.

The Republican proposal also would cut state spending by \$2 million on the state's main college scholarship program, with the idea the money would be replaced by other funding sources.

Leaders of the Democratic minority said they welcomed some of the Republican plans because Democrats also have proposed some of the same cuts in travel, tax refunds and unfilled jobs in state agencies. Democrats also have suggested across-the-board cuts.

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