

*Attachment U: Alternate Pro Zoo Model*  
*“Zoo Time”*

When I was a little kid, one of my favorite things to do was going to the zoo. The school I attended went once a year, and I was able to go twice. The elephants are my favorite attraction. I recently heard that there are debates as to whether elephants should live in zoos or should they roam free. My position is that some elephants should live in zoos for people to see.

Many experts say that elephants have a good life living in captivity. There are 78 zoos that exhibit elephants. Most zoos are taking the necessary steps to make living conditions better for the elephants. They are doing things such as replacing cement floors with sand or dirt. This makes it easier on the feet of elephants. Zoos are also expanding their elephant exhibits to give the large animals more room to roam.

Zoos also protect endangered species. It is estimated that there are 300 to 600,000 African elephants and somewhere between 35 to 50,000 Asian elephants. The Asian elephants are on a path to extinction. Without zoos, there is the likelihood that they will be all gone within our lifetime. The National Zoo plans to spend millions of dollars on a new Asian elephant habitat. That way, they can start their own herd if the Asian elephants disappear.

There are people who want zoos to empty all of their elephant displays. If they decide to rid all the zoos of all the elephants, it would deprive many people of the chance to elephants up close. Doing so could change the public’s favorable opinion of elephants. National Zoo director John Berry says that allowing visitors to experience the elephants up close encourages people to care about endangered species. During one of my visits to the zoo, it was a very hot day. I was sweating a lot. Big Ben, the largest elephant on display, walked up to me and gently squirted my face with water from his trunk. Everyone was amazed at what he did.

That was a very nice thing for Big Ben to do. I am convinced that elephants are the nicest animals on earth. I wish all zoos would keep their elephant displays open to the public. I want all my friends to be able to experience what I did with Big Ben. I feel as though zoos should follow all the necessary steps to keep elephants in zoos. I would raise money at my school if I thought it would help to keep elephants in zoos.

## *Attachment V: Alternate Con Zoo Model*

### **“Free the Elephants”**

We absolutely need to appreciate elephants. They are truly one of the world's greatest creatures, and not just in size. There are some groups of people who are asking the question, do elephants belong in zoos or should they roam free? I know people like to see elephants up close, but we should let elephants live free to roam without constraints of walls and cages.

Elephants are very large animals and they need lots of space. Elephants also have a large brain, which means that they are sophisticated animals. They have social groups and enjoy having other elephants around. The Humane Society of the United States says that elephants suffer physically and emotionally when they live in small places such as zoos. Elephants need more room than most city zoos can provide.

Researchers say elephants that live in zoos suffer from ailments such as arthritis and foot sores. Elephants develop these problems from walking and standing on the concrete floors of their zoo cages. These same problems are absent in wild elephant populations. Nobody would want to spend long days standing on concrete that inflicted injury. Some people say if the elephants live on a refuge or sanctuary people will not be able to see them up close. That is a silly argument. There are animals in nature that we have never seen up close and personal before but we do have knowledge about them. Many of us learn about animals from television or movies. Therefore, seeing animals in zoos is not necessary.

If we really care about the welfare of elephants as much as we say we do then we will find better ways to take care of elephants. Zoos could make better use of their money by investing in larger plots of land. There are sanctuaries in California and Tennessee where elephants can roam on more than 2700 acres. A city zoo has elephant space that is less than an acre. So obviously, a sanctuary is a closer match to roaming in a natural habitat.

We need to agree with the Humane Society. They feel zoos across the country should work together to build parks large enough to hold dozens of elephants instead of just having a few elephants scattered about from zoo to zoo. Elephants are social animals and prefer to live in large groups as opposed to smaller groups. We should not lock elephants up just so we can look at them whenever we want. Free the elephants!