

Smt Minal Kalaskar  
District Election Officer  
District Collector Office  
Opposite Sassoon Hospital  
Station Road, Pune 411001

4 April 2024

**Subject: Request for urgent action for violation of Maharashtra Model Code of Conduct and Election Commission of India Manual on Model Code of Conduct by a politician**

Dear Madam:

I'm writing to you on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India and our more than 2 million members and supporters to report a violation of the Maharashtra Model Code of Conduct; an order issued by the office of the chief electoral officer, dated 24 March 2014, prohibiting the use of animals for election campaigning (**Annexure 1**); the Election Commission of India Manual on Model Code of Conduct; and a letter issued by the Election Commission of India on 19 September 2012 (**Annexure 2**). The violation by Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) MLA Rohit Pawar occurred on 2 April during a press conference in Pune.

In a video that's gone viral on social media (<https://rb.gy/r8cn8o>), Shri Pawar can be seen holding a tied live crab in the air to make a point. The crab can be seen struggling and trying to escape. We urge you to take immediate action against Shri Pawar for violation of the prohibitions on the use of animals for political purposes and to please remind all political parties in your district to refrain from using any animals for political purposes and to ensure that the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, are strictly adhered to.

It's evident from the video that Shri Pawar's use of the crab was preplanned. Just for a media stunt, unnecessary pain and suffering were caused to the animal. Research shows that crabs are intelligent individuals who can experience pain and suffer. They explore their surroundings, have good memories, and communicate with each other.

The letter dated 19 September 2012, issued by the office of the Election Commission of India to all political parties, states that "the cadres/workers of political parties and candidates, in their enthusiasm, should not lose sight of the legal provisions dealing with cruelty to animals". The act of displaying the crab during a political meeting violates Section 11(1)(a) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, which states that subjecting any animal to unnecessary pain and suffering is a punishable offence, and Article 51(A)(g) of the Constitution of

PEOPLE FOR  
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India, which casts a duty on every citizen to have compassion of all living creatures.

We request your immediate action against Shri Pawar for violating the various prohibitions against using animals for political purposes and to remind all the political parties in your district to refrain from using animals. PETA India stands ready to assist in getting the crab checked by a veterinarian and releasing the animal back into nature.

Thank you for your time and attention. I can be reached on 7303787382 or at [ShauryaA@petaindia.org](mailto:ShauryaA@petaindia.org).

Sincerely,



Shaurya Agrawal  
Advocacy Associate  
PETA India

cc: Shri Rajiv Kumar, Chief Election Commissioner, Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi 110001 ([cec@eci.gov.in](mailto:cec@eci.gov.in))

Shri Urvinder Pal Singh Madan, State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra State Election Commission, First Floor, New Administrative Building, Hutatma Rajguru Chowk, Madam Cama Road, Mumbai 400032 ([sec.mh@gov.in](mailto:sec.mh@gov.in))

Shri Sharadchandra Govind Pawar, President of Nationalist Congress Party (SP) and Member of Rajya Sabha, 6 Janpath Road, New Delhi 110001 ([pawars@sansad.nic.in](mailto:pawars@sansad.nic.in))