



# Prohibit Animal Sexual Abuse in Hawaii

## Support [HB 1085](#) / [SB 343](#)

### Rep. Mark Nakashima and Sen. Mike Gabbard

#### Does it happen here?

**YES.** While law enforcement reports are rare, likely because the act of sexually abusing an animal is not illegal, there is other evidence that this kind of cruelty is occurring. Online members-only sites that cater to deviant lifestyles, including bestiality, have posts from members in every county in the state boasting of the lack of a law against animal sexual abuse and offering, as well as seeking, animals for sex. Posters also include tourists coming to the state looking to have sex with animals. A recent local Craigslist post directs interested parties to a private messaging app for animal sexual abusers, reflecting a trend designed to evade scrutiny.

#### Why does it matter?

**Animal sexual assault is more common than most people realize and occurs equally often in urban and rural communities.** Incidents frequently go undetected or unreported for long periods of time, but as laws have changed over the past 20 years to recognize bestiality as a crime, related arrests have risen by 800%.

**Research has found that animal sexual abuse is often linked to other criminal behavior.** More than half of the animal sexual abusers in a 2019 study had a prior or subsequent criminal record involving human sexual abuse, animal abuse, child pornography or interpersonal violence. More than a third of those abusers had also sexually abused humans, mostly children under the age of 12. In recognition of these links, animal cruelty crimes are now tracked by the FBI as a Group A offense, the same category as rape and murder.

#### Isn't it already illegal?

**No. Hawaii is one of only 4 states that does not prohibit sexual abuse of animals.**

Hawaii's animal cruelty law only applies in cases where there is provable physical injury to the animal. Many acts of animal sexual abuse are filmed and discovered well after the incident occurs, so the requisite animal or medical evidence to substantiate physical injury cannot be recovered. Establishing animal sexual abuse as a separate crime would allow state and local law enforcement to identify potentially dangerous predators in our community.



**The bill exempts veterinary procedures, standard animal husbandry and conformation judging.**

Mahalo to criminologist Jenny Edwards and the Humane Society of the United States for research assistance.