

FACT SHEET

HB 698 ANIMAL CRUELTY PENALTIES

This bill increases penalties for first-degree and second-degree animal cruelty. Recognizing animal cruelty as a predictor of broader violent behavior, the FBI added four types of animal abuse to the National Incident Based Reporting System in 2016: Physical abuse or torture; simple or gross neglect; animal sexual abuse; and organized animal abuse (animal fighting).

WHAT IT DOES

- Elevates first-degree animal cruelty to a Class B felony
- Elevates second-degree animal cruelty to a Class B felony when 10 or more animals are affected, or an animal dies
- Recognizes animal cruelty as a predictor of human violence
- Imposes a mandatory prohibition on animal ownership for convicted offenders

WHAT IT DOES NOT

- Create new animal cruelty violations
- Remove exceptions for veterinary, scientific or farming practices
- Remove exceptions for accepted pest control practices

KEY INSIGHTS

- 70% of violent criminals began by abusing animals
- Children witnessing animal abuse are more likely to become abusers
- Case Study: In July 2017, James Montgomery plead no-contest to cruelty in the first degree for abusing 33 animals and killing one. The dogs were housed in a concrete bunker with no ventilation or light. The floor was covered in urine and feces, and dog remains were found. Montgomery was previously convicted of animal cruelty in a case involving more than 150 dogs in 2006. He was sentenced to just nine months in jail in the 2017 case, has completed probation and can own animals again. This case is just one of many that resulted in woefully light punishment for a serious crime resulting in animals' suffering and death.



Hina (Before)



Hina (After)

POTENTIAL IMPACT IF NOT ENACTED

- Continued lack of justice for the voiceless and lenient treatment of animal abuse
- Increased risk to vulnerable populations
- Missed opportunity to address correlations between animal and human violence

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