

Humane Legislative Coalition of Arizona



Fact Sheet for SB 1227- Animal cruelty; sentencing; bond

The Humane Legislative Coalition of Arizona has sponsored a measure that would sharpen our state animal-cruelty law and correct longstanding loopholes that make prosecution of abuse and neglect unnecessarily difficult. SB 1227 is sponsored by Senator John Kavanagh and numerous other bipartisan legislators.

Background

Last year, the Arizona Humane Society (AHS) alone received almost 6,000 reports of animal cruelty. One of the most common problems was a failure to provide water on a hot summer day.

In the past few years some good ideas for tackling these problems have been floated at the Capitol. But all too often they were a small part of legislation that would have moved in the opposite direction; letting those who would abuse animals in other circumstances escape prosecution. This legislation takes some of those good ideas and puts them into a stand-alone bill.

Provisions

1. Defines the reasonable amount and type of food, water and shelter that is required for proper care of an animal
2. Raises penalties for 'second-strike' abusers
3. Raises bond amount in animal seizure hearings to \$250

Specifically, this proposed bill defines food as edible and "in sufficient quantity to meet the needs of the animal," water as drinkable and in sufficient quantity and shelter as appropriate for the animal and weather conditions. This small change in state law closes the current loophole that allows animal abusers who have provided a spoonful of moldy water or a few bites of rotten food to avoid prosecution.

While some current offenses of animal cruelty are misdemeanors in current law, prosecutors need better tools to stop repeat offenders. Thus, the provision to raise the penalty for a second offense to a class 6 felony was added, which provides prosecutors an additional tool for the most egregious abusers.

About The Humane Legislative Coalition of Arizona

Formalized in 2014, the Humane Legislative Coalition of Arizona is an alliance of the state's leading, active, humane organizations and advocates who share the common goals of protecting animals from abuse, neglect and inhumane practices, and ensuring that those who harm animals are held accountable. Leveraging awareness, advocacy and legislation, the Coalition stands together to advance animal welfare and ensure Arizona remains a national leader in the humane treatment of its animals.

Collectively, the Humane Legislative Coalition of Arizona represents more than 350,000 Arizona voters, supporters, stakeholders and donors who are passionate about the protection of animals. The Coalition includes the Animal Defense League of Arizona, Arizona Humane Society, Humane Society of Southern Arizona, and Humane Voters of Arizona.

For more information on this bill and other legislation and how you can help, please contact the Animal Defense League of Arizona at kmichael@adlaz.org