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Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender to the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs re:

H.B. 698: RELATING TO ANIMAL CRUELTY

Chair: Rep. David A. Tarnas  
Vice Chair: Rep. Mahina Poepoe  
And Members of the Committee

The Office of the Public Defender (OPD) **opposes** H.B. 698.

HB 698 proposes to amend HRS sections 711-1108.5, 711-1109, 711-1109.3, 711-1109.35, 711-1109.37, 711-1109.4, 711-1109.7 and 711-1109.8 for the purpose of increasing the penalties for various crimes relating to cruelty to animals. While the OPD does not condone the mistreatment, neglect or abuse of any animal the OPD does not agree that increased penalties for said offenses will have any deterrent effect upon the community in general.

Increasing the penalty for an offense does not deter the prohibited conduct. In its publication "Five Things About Deterrence,"<sup>1</sup> the National Institute of Justice sets forth several<sup>2</sup> relevant precepts regarding deterrence: (1) "The certainty of being caught is a vastly more powerful deterrent than the punishment"; (2) "Sending an

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<sup>1</sup> "Five Things About Deterrence," May 2016, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.  
<https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/247350.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> The fifth precept, "There is no proof that the death penalty deters criminals," is not relevant to the instant bill.

individual convicted of a crime to prison isn't a very effective way to deter crime"; (3) "Police deter crime by increasing the perception that criminal will be caught and punished"; and (4) "Increasing the severity of punishment does little to deter crime." Increasing the severity of the offenses listed in this bill and exposing violators to up to twenty years of imprisonment will not deter others from committing acts of animal abuse.

The Legislature's objective should be to focus resources on enforcing existing laws, preventing cruelty cases and rehabilitating offenders. Instead of increasing the penalties for existing animal cruelty offenses, which will result in added costs for the prosecution and incarceration of offenders, a more productive approach would be to increase education regarding animal welfare, increase enforcement of existing laws relating to cruelty to animals, increase the enforcement presence in the community and to focus on rehabilitating offenders using non-carceral, non-punitive practices. According to the National Institute of Health, "[a]nimal welfare legislation is routinely underenforced by the state."<sup>3</sup> Further, "[e]nforcement does not necessarily need to involve carceral outcomes, and indeed, sometimes 'in the field' educational or supportive responses to offending – as an alternative to criminal or regulatory response – are more appropriate."<sup>4</sup> For example, the Benchmark Animal Rehabilitative Curriculum's (B.A.R.C.) online Animal Cruelty Prevention and Education Course is designed to "inspire change in attitudes and actions toward in individuals who have mistreated them."<sup>5</sup> B.A.R.C. emphasizes the value of education as preventing repetitive animal abuse.

By failing to include some form of education as part of whatever other measures the criminal justice system takes against those who mistreat animals, we're virtually guaranteeing that nothing about the offenders' thoughts and attitudes toward animals will change. A system that punishes animal abuse offenders, but ignores the need for rehabilitation, means many will reoffend. If the criminal justice system

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<sup>3</sup> Rodriguez Ferrere, M. B., "Animal Welfare Underenforcement as a Rule of Law Problem," June 12, 2022, National Institute of Health, National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information.

<sup>4</sup> Id.

<sup>5</sup> See <https://barceducation.org/>

desires to reduce the likelihood that offenders will repeat their abusive behavior toward animals, it's imperative that in most, if not all, cases of animal abuse, an educational component be included as part of the pre- or post-conviction terms or conditions.

**Educating animal owners in general regarding the needs of animals, and what the law requires owners to provide for their animals, is a critical element in the prevention of animal cruelty cases.**

(Emphasis added). Indeed, even the Hawaiian Humane Society notes the importance of education as a response to animal abuse or cruelty.<sup>6</sup>

In sum, the OPD does not condone animal mistreatment, neglect or abuse, **and** urges the Legislature to focus on education and rehabilitation as more effectual and corrective efforts when preventing cruelty to animals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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<sup>6</sup> See “Investigations, Rescues & Laws,” Hawaiian Humane Society (“We walk a fine line between education, advocacy, and enforcement, using an outreach-based approach for animal welfare. Often, we find that where the laws fall short, our influence as advisors and partners with pet owners, yields positive results.”)

<https://hawaiianhumane.org/investigations-rescues-laws/>

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 2:26:54 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rachelle Teruya Alameida	Hina’s Legacy Rescue Foundation	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Subject: Strong Support for HB698 – Strengthening Penalties for Animal Cruelty

Dear Members of the House Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Committee,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for HB698, a bill that seeks to strengthen penalties for animal cruelty offenses in Hawai‘i. As someone deeply concerned about the welfare of animals and the safety of our community, I believe this legislation is both necessary and urgent.

The rise in reported animal cruelty cases is alarming. In New York City, for instance, animal cruelty complaints reached a five-year high in 2024, with 453 reports—a 10% increase from the previous year. It’s important to recognize that these figures likely represent only a fraction of the actual incidents, as many cases go unreported.

Research has consistently demonstrated a strong link between animal cruelty and violence against humans. The FBI has highlighted that animal cruelty is a predictive or co-occurring crime with violence toward people, including intimate partners, children, and elders. Alarmingly, studies have found that 43% of school shooters between 1988 and 2012 had histories of animal abuse. These statistics underscore the urgent need for stricter penalties to deter such behavior and protect our community.

Animals are innocent beings who rely on us for protection and care, much like children. Allowing abusers to go unpunished not only fails these vulnerable creatures but also jeopardizes public safety. By enacting HB698, we can take a significant step toward safeguarding both animals and people in our state.

I urge you to support this vital legislation and ensure that those who commit acts of animal cruelty are held accountable. Together, we can create a safer and more compassionate Hawai‘i for all its inhabitants.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Rachelle Teruya Alameida

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:14:45 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan B Roberts Emery	The Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas , Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of Committee ,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, I am Co Chair of the Grenn Party of Hawai'i. We would like to weigh in on HB698,concerning cruelty to animals. We support passing HB698 through your committee. We are a voice for the voiceless. As an equine massage therapist for the past 25 years, I know the depth of animals compassion for humans. I ask that we reflect that compassion back by protecting our animals.

Please Pass HB698,

Mahalo,

Susan RobertsEmery

Co chair GPH

Paauiilo

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 4:29:30 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Animal Rights Hawai'i supports HB698. Mahalo

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 4:57:02 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jayme-Lynn Saltiban	Hinas Legacy	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am ashamed at how our state handles animal cruelty case when there is clear evidence! For example, Eli Papali Loli abused his poor dog for many years to the point where the dog passed away. With all the video and eyes witness evidence, he was able to walk free! Please make stricter policies and consequences for animal abusers especially with proper evidence. It still haunts us till this day what Max (the dog) had gone through and if it wasn't for Hinas Legacy to sweep in and take Max from his abuser, Max would not know what true love means. These mana wahines at Hinas Legacy showered him with love in his last days. Eli Papali Loli is also not a US Citizen so I will be reporting him to ICE as well. Please please make harsher punishments for animal abusers. We will not stop till we get justice! Mahalo

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 12:51:49 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
TIFFANY KIM	Fur-Angel Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are writing in support of HB698 to increase penalties for animal cruelty. The evidence abounds that people who commit crimes and heinous acts towards animals will eventually hurt humans as well. In order to keep our communities safe from harm, there must be stricter consequences imposed for actions that harm animals as it often leads to other offenses. Keeping everyone safe from harm should be a priority to our legislators and as such we are in strong support of enforcing stricter laws and punishment for animal cruelty offenders.

## **Testimony in Support of Hawai'i House Bill 698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty**

### **Hina's Legacy Rescue Foundation**

P.O. Box 1843

Waianae, Hawaii 96792

hinaslegacyrescue@gmail.com

February 19, 2025

### **Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs**

Hawai'i State Legislature

State Capitol

Honolulu, HI

### **Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,**

On behalf of **Hina's Legacy**, we submit this testimony in **strong support** of **House Bill 698**, which seeks to strengthen Hawai'i's animal cruelty laws. As an organization dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating, rehoming, and advocating animals in need, we witness firsthand the devastating effects of neglect, abuse, and cruelty. HB 698 is a necessary step toward **ensuring stronger protections for animals** and **holding offenders accountable for their actions**, as we have had so many go unpunished.

Too often, we see animals who have endured extreme suffering due to loopholes in existing laws or lack of enforcement. From cases of **starvation, abandonment, and intentional harm** to severe neglect leading to preventable injuries and death, our team works tirelessly to save these innocent lives. However, **rescue alone is not enough**—we need **stronger legal measures** to prevent cruelty before it occurs and to ensure that those responsible **face appropriate consequences**.

Additionally, studies have shown that **animal abuse is often linked to other forms of violence**, including domestic abuse and violent crime, which we unfortunately see often in Hawai'i. By strengthening penalties and closing gaps in current statutes, HB 698 not only protects animals but also helps create a **safer and more compassionate community** for all.

We urge the Legislature to **prioritize the welfare of Hawai'i's animals** by passing HB 698. As a rescue organization, we stand ready to assist in enforcement efforts, education, and advocacy, but we need stronger laws to make a real, lasting impact.

**Mahalo for your time and consideration.**

**Me ka ha'aha'a,**

Chantell Moniz

President/Founder

Hina's Legacy Rescue Foundation



## Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: Feb. 19, 2025

To: Chair Rep. David Tarnas  
Vice Chair Rep. Mahina Poepoe  
and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Director of Community Engagement  
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony in strong support of HB 698: Relating to Animal Cruelty  
Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025, 2 p.m., Room 325 & Videoconference

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On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our strong support for House Bill 698, which amends the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is a difficult crime to prosecute for a variety of reasons. Its victims cannot seek justice for themselves. Many offenses take place behind closed doors. Witnesses frequently know the perpetrators and are unwilling to testify, often out of fear.

Those fears are not irrational. Decades of research has established correlations between animal abuse, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, elder abuse, and other forms of violence. In recognition of this mounting body of evidence, 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). In minimizing the consequences of animal cruelty, which our state legal system currently does, we are putting both people and animals at risk.

When there is sufficient evidence to bring an animal cruelty case to trial, the hard work and bravery it takes to bear witness on behalf of vulnerable animals results in minor penalties, almost never including jail time. This measure would elevate the penalties in these cases, which is appropriate given that only the most egregious abuse is ever brought to trial.

Please pass HB 698 for the protection of animals and people. Mahalo for your consideration.



826 Kaheka Street, #305  
Honolulu, HI 96814  
Phone: (808) 721-4267  
E-Mail: [reid@omizuarch.com](mailto:reid@omizuarch.com)  
Web: [www.omizuarch.com](http://www.omizuarch.com)

19 February 2025

TO: Honorable David Tarnas, Chair / Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Reid Mizue, AIA  
**OMIZU Architecture Inc.**

SUBJECT: **House Bill 698**  
**Relating to Animal Cruelty**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Reid Mizue and I am submitting testimony in **support** of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense. Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action. HB698 is a critical step in protecting both animals and our broader community by increasing penalties for animal cruelty offenses. Key provisions of this measure include:

- Elevating cruelty to animals in the first degree to a Class B felony.
- Making cruelty to animals in the second degree a Class B felony if the offense involves the death of an animal or ten or more animals.
- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.
- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate.

Mahalo,  
Omizu Architecture, Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reid T. Mizue" with a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Reid T. Mizue, AIA

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 5:49:28 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kat Miller	Hawaii SPCA	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing today to ask that we have an increase in the penalties for animal cruelty. We believe it is time now in Haawaii to stand up against animal cruelty and make the perpetrators think twice maybe.

Please pass HB698 now!

Please kokua!

Kathy & Pat Miller

Hawaii SPCA

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 2:55:37 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sarah McKay	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Animals deserve humane treatment. The way a human treats an animal is often an indication of they way they will treat other humans. Abuse of an animal deserves stricter penalties to keep our animals safe and to keep predators from repeat offenses.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:01:15 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Niccole Griffin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs committee,

My name is Niccole Griffin, and I am writing in strong support of HB698, which seeks to strengthen penalties for animal cruelty offenses in Hawai'i.

Throughout my career and volunteer work, I have witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of animal cruelty. While working in a veterinary emergency room, I saw animals come in with heartbreaking injuries due to neglect and abuse. One of the most difficult parts of that job was knowing that, in some cases, these animals would be returned to the very individuals who harmed them, with little assurance that they wouldn't suffer again.

Additionally, as a volunteer with a farmed animal sanctuary, I see the consequences of cruelty and neglect on a daily basis. All of our residents come from cases of abuse. Every year, we receive hundreds of inquiries about abandoned, abused, or mistreated animals across O'ahu alone. Many of these cases involve animals who have endured severe suffering, and without intervention, their fates would be unimaginable.

Strengthening penalties for animal cruelty is not just about protecting animals; it is about safeguarding our entire community. Research consistently shows the undeniable link between animal cruelty and violence against people, particularly vulnerable populations. Since 2020, domestic violence has increased in Hawai'i by 46%, along with other rising crime rates. By increasing accountability for these crimes, we take a critical step toward making Hawai'i safer for all beings.

I urge you to pass HB698 to ensure that those who harm animals are held to a higher standard of justice. These animals deserve to be protected it's our kuleana as kia'i holoholona to care for them. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Niccole Griffin

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:14:10 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dionne Christine Schultz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of HB 698: Strengthening Penalties for Animal Cruelty in Hawai‘i**

**To:** Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the House Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Committee

**From:** Dionne Christine Schultz, Concerned Citizen, Animal Welfare Advocate, and Member of the Military Community on Oahu

**Date:** February 20, 2025

**Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of HB 698 – Protecting Hawai‘i’s Animals and Holding Offenders Accountable**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing today not just as a resident of Hawai‘i, but as a member of the military community on Oahu and an unwavering advocate for the welfare of animals. I strongly support HB 698 and urge its passage because stronger penalties for animal cruelty in our state are long overdue.

As a military-affiliated individual, I have witnessed firsthand the heartbreak and devastation caused when service members abandon or mistreat their pets. It is an unfortunate reality that some individuals who are stationed in Hawai‘i fail to take responsibility for their animals when their orders change, leaving them behind in shelters—or worse. Currently, military law has limited enforcement on these cases, and unless an egregious act of cruelty is committed, there is little recourse to hold these individuals accountable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Strengthening Hawai‘i’s penalties for animal cruelty will not only bring justice to these innocent creatures but will provide a legal precedent that I and other advocates can use to push for additional consequences within the military system itself.

**The Military's Legal Standing on Animal Abuse**

The **Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)** addresses animal abuse under **Article 134**, commonly known as the "**General Article.**" This article covers offenses not explicitly detailed elsewhere in the UCMJ but which are considered prejudicial to good order and discipline or bring discredit upon the armed forces. Animal abuse, neglect, or abandonment can be prosecuted under this provision.

## Key Points:

- **Scope of Article 134:** It encompasses various misconducts, including animal abuse, that adversely affect the military's order and reputation.
- **Definitions:**
  - **Abuse:** Intentional acts causing unnecessary pain or suffering to an animal.
  - **Neglect:** Failure to provide necessary care, resulting in harm.
  - **Abandonment:** Leaving an animal without ensuring its well-being.
- **Punishments:**
  - Conviction can lead to a **bad-conduct discharge**, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and up to **one year of confinement**.
  - If the abuse involves a military working animal or results in severe injury or death, penalties may increase to a **dishonorable discharge** and up to **five years of confinement**.

While the UCMJ provides a framework for addressing animal abuse, enforcement and prosecution can vary. Strengthening state laws, such as through HB 698, can enhance legal avenues to hold offenders accountable and may influence military policies to adopt stricter measures against service members who mistreat animals.

## Sources:

- [UCMJ Article 134: Animal Abuse - My Military Lawyers](#)
- [UCMJ 134 - Animal Abuse - Bilecki Law Group, PLLC](#)
- [Uniform Code of Military Justice - Wikipedia](#)

## The Impact on Hawai'i's Military Community

Oahu has a significant military presence, with thousands of service members and their families rotating in and out of duty stations every year. While many military families are responsible pet owners, there is an undeniable problem with pet abandonment and neglect among a small but damaging portion of this population. Some service members view their pets as temporary companions, discarding them when they receive new orders rather than making responsible arrangements. Others engage in outright cruelty with little fear of severe repercussions.

Currently, military justice does not treat these cases as seriously as it should. With stronger state laws in place, we can set a higher standard of accountability. I will use HB 698 to advocate for additional military penalties for service members who abandon or mistreat their animals while stationed in Hawai'i. The military has the ability to impose additional punishments under the UCMJ, but these cases are often dismissed as "civil matters" when state penalties are too lenient. If Hawai'i takes a strong stand on animal cruelty, it will give me and others the legal leverage we need to push for stronger military enforcement as well.

## A Call for Compassion and Responsibility

The way we treat animals is a reflection of our society's values. A stronger legal framework for punishing animal cruelty in Hawai'i will not only protect innocent lives but will also reinforce that neglect and abuse will not be tolerated—whether by civilians or service members. I urge you to pass HB 698 to help create a safer, more humane Hawai'i for all.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

**Sincerely,**

**Dionne Christine Schultz**  
**808-780-0022**

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:30:42 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Susan Stayton, and as a lifelong animal lover and guardian, I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense. Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action. HB698 is a critical step in protecting both animals and our broader community by increasing penalties for animal cruelty offenses. Key provisions of this measure include:

- Elevating cruelty to animals in the first degree to a Class B felony.
- Making cruelty to animals in the second degree a Class B felony if the offense involves the death of an animal or ten or more animals.
- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.
- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo for your consideration,  
Susan, Lawai, Kauai

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:40:14 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
ashley lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Ashley Lee and I am here today to urge lawmakers to strengthen our animal cruelty laws. Animals are sentient beings who feel pain, fear, and love, yet far too often, they suffer at the hands of cruel individuals who face little to no consequences.

Every day, we hear heartbreaking stories of animals being beaten, starved, neglected, and tortured. Many of these abusers receive only minor fines or short probation periods, which fail to serve as a real deterrent. Weak penalties send a dangerous message that harming animals is not a serious crime. Studies have repeatedly shown that individuals who abuse animals often escalate to violence against people. By enforcing stricter laws and harsher punishments, we are not only protecting innocent animals but also making our communities safer.

Stronger animal cruelty laws should include felony charges for severe abuse, mandatory prison time for repeat offenders, and lifetime bans on animal ownership for those convicted. Additionally, better enforcement and education are crucial in preventing abuse before it happens.

Animals cannot speak for themselves, but we can be their voice. It is our moral and legal duty to protect them from harm. I urge lawmakers to take immediate action by passing tougher animal cruelty laws that reflect the seriousness of these crimes. Justice for animals is justice for all.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:41:39 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joyce Aono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There are endless studies which clearly link those who harm animals, often are those who harm children and others as time passes. Cruelty begins small and escalates when the perpetrator needs to dominate, masking their own past or insecurities.

Cruelty to animals must be stopped to prevent the greater danger of children observing and perpetuating the same learned behaviors in their future.

The punishment must be severe enough to seriously deter cruel behavior.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:44:03 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kimberly Kaopuiki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of HB698. Pets are more than animals, they're family. For many, its the emotional support so many need: especially when theyr'e alone. I don't have any pets now, but I did and our family has many. We love them just as we love all our keiki. Our children love their animals too. They grow together and are part of each other. They/We cry when they're sick or in pain. We have spent thousands of dollars just to keep our pets healthy and liviing. Please protect animals just as they protect us. They let us know when people are entering or trespassing. They bark when unfamiliar beings come near. We owe them the safety, they gift us. Please support HB698

Thank you.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:55:01 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shannon Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB698

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:56:48 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Savannah Sherman, Esq.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Combating animal cruelty decreases violent crime amongst humans. People who abuse animals are far more likely to commit violence against other people. A 2017 study found that in domestic violence situations, 89% of women with pets reported violence to the pet. A 1983 study found that 88% of homes being investigated for physical child abuse also had animal abuse. In fact, studies have shown that as much as one-third of abused women have delayed leaving the home due to fear of harm occurring to pets. Source: <https://aldf.org/article/the-link-between-cruelty-to-animals-and-violence-toward-humans-2/>

Combatting dogfighting is also extremely effective at handling other crimes. Dogfighting busts almost always lead to the discovery of illegal drugs, and two-thirds of the time to illegal weapons. The average dog fight lasts one to two hours and only ends when a dog is unable to continue fighting. This leads to prolonged animal suffering, as well as creates an environment for crime to run rampant. Source: <https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/the-link-between-animal-cruelty-and-human-violence>

For the health and safety of humans and animals alike, please vote yes on HB698.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:57:55 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dave Alison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an animal lover, long time resident of the State of Hawaii and a US Citizen, I hereby fully support bill HB698 as written.

The continued abuse and killing of animals; particularly dogs, MUST stop! Hopefully, this Bill will deter animal abusers due to the serious penalties and consequences in accordance with the law and punishment stated herein.

I firmly hope that our State Legislators will pass and affirm Bill HB698 for our animals which we love dearly and accept them as part of our Ohana.

Looking forward to a positive outcome when this Bill becomes law!!

Aloha and thank you.

R, Dave Alison

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:58:06 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Debra Alison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an animal lover, long time resident of the State of Hawaii & a U.S.Citizen, I hereby fully support Bill HB698 as written.

The continued abuse and killing of animals; particularly dogs, MUST stop! Hopefully, this Bill will deter animal abusers due to the serious penalties and consequences in accordance with the law and punishment stated herein.

I firmly hope that our State Legislators will pass and affirm Bill HB698 for our animals which we love dearly and accept them part of our Ohana.

Looking forward to a positive outcome when this BILL becomes law!

Aloha and thank you!

R, Debra Alison

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:58:59 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lory Ono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,  
My name is Lory Ono, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

HB698 is a critical step in protecting both animals and our broader community by increasing penalties for animal cruelty offenses. Key provisions of this measure include:

- Elevating cruelty to animals in the first degree to a Class B felony.
- Making cruelty to animals in the second degree a Class B felony if the offense involves the death of an animal or ten or more animals.
- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.
- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,

Lory Ono

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 4:00:38 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael I Rice	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in SUPPORT of the changes made to our Animal Cruelty Laws as laid out in HB698. Current practices of fighting animals are cruel on their own, and are often focal points of criminal activity, with fights, shootings, and robberies taking place at such events, along with sales of illicit items such as drugs, firearms, and fireworks. On the other end of the spectrum is that cruelty towards animals is usually a warning sign for disturbing psychological problems that can have negative effects on the community if allowed to go unnoticed.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 4:02:02 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Barbara Best	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We must, apparently, enforce kindness. Cruelty to animals is cruelty and we need to move toward less violence of any kind. Please support HB698

Mahalo, Bobbie and Bill Best, Wailuku

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 4:40:18 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patty Kahanamoku- Teruya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting HB698 to cruelty to animals to a hasher violation to Class B Felon, and a large fine. Laws need to be change in order to protect our animals from any harm.

Mahalo nu'u,

Patty Kahanamoku-Teruya

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 4:42:49 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Clayton Taparra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:10:50 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Natalia Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Animal cruelty is widespread problem in society, and can have devastating consequences animals and for society as a whole. Increasing legal penalties for acts of animal cruelty would send a clear message that society does not tolerate the unnecessary suffering of vulnerable beings.

When perpetrators of animal abuse are met with harsher penalties, it serves not only to deter potential offenders but also to emphasize the responsibility humans have to treat all living beings with dignity and respect. Strengthening the laws surrounding animal cruelty ensures that justice is served for those who cannot speak for themselves.

In some cases, individuals who engage in violent acts toward animals are more likely to escalate their behavior to include violence against humans. By imposing stricter legal consequences on those who abuse animals, we can help prevent the normalization of cruelty and intervene early in potentially dangerous patterns of behavior. This proactive approach not only protects animals but also contributes to the overall safety of communities, making it imperative that we increase legal penalties for animal cruelty to reflect the severity of these offenses.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:33:59 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
irene kloepfer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, this is a critical and vital bill to pass. Not only protecting our animal friends but more importantly showing as a species if we are going to move e toward caring or cruelty. This bill says a lot about us as civilized human beings. Mahalo for caring. Irene

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:58:00 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stand in Support

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:58:35 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Richard Janik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a no brainer. Too many cases of unbelievably cruel animal treatment stories. Make the punishment as equality harsh.

Richard Janik, MD

Lihue, Kauai

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 6:08:05 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kim Uyeda-Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of House Bill HB698**

**Chairperson and Members of the Committee,**

My name is Kim Uyeda-Young and I am honored to submit testimony in strong support of House Bill 698, which seeks to strengthen our state's animal cruelty laws. I come before you today as a concerned citizen who believes that animals deserve legal protections that reflect our moral and ethical responsibility toward them.

Animal cruelty is not just a matter of ethics—it is a public safety concern. Studies have repeatedly shown a strong correlation between animal abuse and violent crimes against humans. Strengthening our laws to impose stricter penalties on offenders not only deters potential abuse but also helps prevent escalation to more severe crimes. A robust legal framework will enable law enforcement to take swift action against perpetrators and provide justice for the voiceless victims of abuse.

Current penalties for animal cruelty are insufficient in deterring repeat offenses and fail to reflect the severity of such crimes. House Bill 698 proposes enhanced penalties, stricter enforcement, and improved mechanisms for reporting and prosecuting cases of abuse. By passing this bill, we will join other states in setting a higher standard for animal welfare and demonstrating our commitment to protecting the most vulnerable among us.

Furthermore, strengthening animal cruelty laws aligns with public sentiment. The vast majority of our community members believe that those who commit heinous acts against animals should be held accountable. This legislation is not just about punishment—it is about prevention, education, and ensuring that our legal system upholds values of compassion and justice.

I urge the committee to pass House Bill 698 and take a decisive step toward a more humane and just society. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions or provide further information as needed.

**Sincerely,**

**Kim Uyeda-Young**

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 6:41:48 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Geralyn Camarillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Strong Support of HB698**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and esteemed members of the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee!

I come before you with deep reverence and urgency to express my **strongest support** for **HB698**, a bill that seeks to increase the consequences for animal cruelty and abuse, ensuring justice for victims and greater protection for those who continue to suffer.

Animals are sentient beings—our cherished companions, guardians of the land, and beloved members of our ‘ohana. They feel pain, fear, and love just as we do, yet too often, they are subjected to unthinkable cruelty with little to no accountability for the perpetrators. **This must change.**

There is a **disturbing rise** in violence against animals across our islands, and we know that those who harm animals **do not stop there**—such acts of cruelty are often a precursor to violence against people. To protect both our communities and these innocent beings, we must **hold offenders accountable with consequences that reflect the gravity of their actions.**

Many abused animals never get a second chance. Some succumb to their injuries, never knowing safety or kindness. Others endure unimaginable suffering before being rescued—forever carrying the scars of their trauma. **They have no voice, so we must be their voice!**

HB698 is more than just a bill—it is a statement of who we are as a people. Hawai‘i is a place of Aloha, of deep respect and care for all living beings. Our laws must reflect these values. By **strengthening protections and consequences for animal cruelty**, we take a stand for compassion, justice, and the kind of future we want for our keiki, ‘ohana and our ‘āina.

I urge you, with all my heart, to pass **HB698** and help create a future where no animal is left to suffer in silence. Let us be the guardians they deserve.

Mahalo for your time, your service, and your commitment to a more just and compassionate Hawai‘i.

With deepest gratitude and Aloha,  
Geralyn Camarillo

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 7:05:13 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Deborah Misajon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Deborah Misajon

27-265 Old Mamalahoa Hwy., POB 327

Papaikou, HI 96781

18 February 2024

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Hawai'i State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Support of HB698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Deborah Misajon and I am submitting testimony in **strong support of HB698**, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

HB698 is a critical step in protecting both animals and our broader community by increasing penalties for animal cruelty offenses. Key provisions of this measure include:

- Elevating cruelty to animals in the first degree to a Class B felony.
- Making cruelty to animals in the second degree a Class B felony if the offense involves the death of an animal or ten or more animals.
- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.
- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,

Deborah Misajon

The Coconut Traveler

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 7:12:01 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TERI SAVAIINAEA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Teri Kia Savaiinaea, and I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

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- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Kind regards,

Teri Kia Savaiinaea

District 45, Wai'anae resident



**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 7:28:07 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support. Many of us consider our pets as members of the family, not as possessions to do whatever we want with.

Please move this bill forward.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 9:12:51 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,  
My name is Andrew Isoda, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

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- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,

Andrew Isoda  
Lahaina, Mau'i

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 10:01:11 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jacoby Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee:

I write to express my strong support for HB 698, which strengthens penalties for animal cruelty offenses in Hawai‘i. As someone deeply committed to malama ‘āina and the protection of all living beings in our islands, I believe this legislation is both timely and necessary.

The statistics presented in this bill are deeply troubling - a 26% increase in animal cruelty cases in Honolulu from 2018 to 2023. However, even more concerning is the well-documented link between animal abuse and violence against humans. When 70% of violent criminals begin their pattern of violence by abusing animals, we must recognize animal cruelty for what it is - a serious crime that demands serious consequences.

This legislation takes a comprehensive, graduated approach by:

- Elevating first-degree animal cruelty from a Class C to a Class B felony
- Creating stronger penalties for repeat offenders
- Establishing enhanced sentences when animal cruelty occurs in front of minors
- Maintaining appropriate exceptions for legitimate veterinary, research, and pest control practices

The escalating penalty structure is particularly important, as it recognizes that repeat offenses demonstrate a pattern of behavior that requires stronger intervention. By raising subsequent offenses to higher felony classifications, we send a clear message that our community will not tolerate the abuse of vulnerable animals.

E mālama i nā holoholona - to care for the animals - is not just a cultural value, it is a moral imperative and a matter of public safety. This bill recognizes that protecting animals ultimately protects our entire community.

I strongly urge you to pass HB 698. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this crucial measure.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,  
Jacoby Young

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 10:12:58 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Valerie Alesna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Too many cruel and evil people are getting away with unthinkable crimes against innocent animals. We need accountability and recourse to fix these tragedies.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 10:13:47 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Peter Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Peter Wilson

Pahoa, HI 96778

2/18/2025

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Hawai'i State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Support of HB698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Peter Wilson, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

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- Making cruelty to animals in the second degree a Class B felony if the offense involves the death of an animal or ten or more animals.
- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.

· Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,

Peter Wilson

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 10:15:00 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bo Breda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Bo breda

Pahoa, HI 96778

2/18/2025

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Hawai'i State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Support of HB698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bo Brerda, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

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- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.

· Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,

Bo Breda

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 10:19:23 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melina Clark	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the bill in order to crack down on all the abuse, neglect and killings taking place in Hawaii year after year with little to no legal consequences to stop these perpetrators. All persons, including parents of children caught abusing animals must be punished to the highest degree. Police officers and the Hawaiian Humane Society need to respond to all cases reported or witnessed by their own people too. These islands have a bad reputation for animal cruelty and when residents or visitors try to get help, we get nowhere almost every single time. I support this bill 100%.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 2:10:25 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dr. Anil Mehta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dr. Anil Mehta

Kahului, 96732

Feb 18, 2025

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Hawai‘i State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Support of HB698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is [Anil Mehta], and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense. Further we have seen an increase in animal cruelty cases to play a critical role in assisting our students at UH who have a condition to live regular lives.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai‘i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

HB698 is a critical step in protecting both animals and our broader community by increasing penalties for animal cruelty offenses. Key provisions of this measure include:

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- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.

- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,  
Anil Mehta

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 3:38:06 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amanda Taber	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Animal cruelty needs to be punished and taken seriously.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 7:29:42 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Grace Haider	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,  
I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 698, which seeks to strengthen protections against animal cruelty in Hawai‘i. This bill is a crucial step forward in ensuring the safety and well-being of animals and holding individuals accountable for inhumane treatment. Animal cruelty is a moral issue and a public safety concern. Research has consistently shown a link between violence toward animals and violence toward people, making it imperative that we take meaningful action to prevent and address such acts. By enhancing penalties for acts of cruelty and closing legal loopholes, HB 698 will provide greater deterrence against mistreatment and reinforce Hawai‘i’s commitment to ethical and humane treatment of animals. Hawai‘i has long been known for its deep cultural respect for all living beings. Strengthening our animal cruelty laws aligns with these values and ensures that our state continues to set a standard for compassion and responsibility.  
I urge you to pass HB 698 and stand in defense of those who cannot speak for themselves. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Maholo Nui,

Grace

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 7:32:17 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Wendy Tanno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am unable to be present but I feel penalty and punishment should be treated as doing to a human as to a dog.

Violence needs to stop!!!!

thank you

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 7:46:14 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John Haider	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

As a passionate advocate for animal welfare and a supporter of local rescue organizations, I am submitting this testimony in strong support of House Bill 698. This bill is a critical step toward strengthening Hawai'i's animal cruelty laws and providing much-needed protections for the animals in our communities.

Every day, animal rescue organizations across the state work tirelessly to save, rehabilitate, and find loving homes for abused, neglected, and abandoned animals. As pet lovers, we do what we can—donating, volunteering, fostering, and spreading awareness—but we need stronger laws to prevent cruelty before it happens and to hold offenders accountable.

The rising cases of animal cruelty in Hawai'i is heartbreaking. Many of us have seen or heard of animals suffering from neglect, starvation, abuse, and abandonment, often with little to no consequences for those responsible. This bill not only seeks to increase penalties for animal cruelty offenses but also acknowledges the link between animal abuse and other forms of violence, such as domestic abuse. By taking action now, we can create a safer environment for both animals and people.

We urge you to pass HB 698 to provide greater protections for Hawai'i's animals and stronger support for the rescue organizations fighting to save them. These organizations cannot do it alone—we need legislative backing to create real change.

Mahalo for your time, consideration, and dedication to making Hawai'i a safer, more compassionate place for all.

## **Testimony in Support of Hawai'i House Bill 698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty**

Eileen Sam  
631 10th Avenue, Unit B  
Honolulu, HI 96816  
eileensam@gmail.com  
February 19, 2025

### **Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs (JHA)**

Hawai'i State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI

### **Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,**

I am submitting this testimony in fierce and unwavering support of House Bill 698. This bill is not just necessary—it is a moral imperative. Hawai'i's animal cruelty laws must be strengthened to ensure that those who harm animals are held fully accountable for their actions.

On January 25, 2025, a judge ruled that breeder Heather Hinkle—despite clear video evidence of her *abusing* her dog—should pay a mere \$500 fine and, even more shockingly, be allowed to keep the very animal she harmed. This is beyond unacceptable—it is an outright failure of justice. It is appalling that our legal system permitted an abuser to retain custody of her victim. What message does this send? That animal cruelty carries little to no consequences? That abusers can continue their abuse with impunity? This is not justice. This is complicity.

As an advocate for animal rights, I can say with certainty that Ms. Hinkle's case is not an isolated incident. Time and time again, we see cases of extreme neglect, starvation, violence, and abandonment—yet perpetrators walk away with little more than a slap on the wrist. How many more animals must suffer before we take real action?

Hawai'i is facing a crisis of rising animal cruelty, and it is heartbreaking. This bill is not just about penalties—it's about recognizing that animal abuse is deeply connected to other forms of violence, including domestic abuse. Research shows that those who harm animals often escalate to harming people. By passing HB 698, we are not only protecting animals but also taking a crucial step toward preventing further violence in our communities.

We urge you to pass HB 698 to provide stronger protections for Hawai'i's animals and greater support for the rescue organizations working tirelessly to save them. These organizations cannot fight this battle alone. They need legislative action to create real change.

Mahalo for your time, consideration, and commitment to making Hawai'i a place where cruelty is never tolerated—and where compassion and justice prevail.

Mahalo,

Eileen Sam

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 8:35:32 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cassie Price	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill!!

Animals are family and matter too!!

Peter Paul Pinto  
89-361 Mokiawe St Waianae Hi, 96792  
peterpaulpinto@gmail.com

February 18, 2025

To: The House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Support of HB698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty  
Hearing on Thursday, February 20, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Peter Pinto, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly.

Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

HB698 is a critical step in protecting both animals and our broader community by increasing penalties for animal cruelty offenses. Key provisions of this measure include:

- Elevating cruelty to animals in the first degree to a Class B felony.
- Making cruelty to animals in the second degree a Class B felony if the offense involves the death of an animal or ten or more animals.

- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.
- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,  
Peter Paul Pinto  
House Of Salvation Church

Sandra J Forgan  
Kihei, Maui Hi, 96753  
02/18/25

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Hawai'i State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Support of HB698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sandra J. Forgan, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

HB698 is a critical step in protecting both animals and our broader community by increasing penalties for animal cruelty offenses. Key provisions of this measure include:

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- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.
- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,  
Sandra J Forgan

Daya Green  
Pukalani, HI 96768

2/18/2025

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Hawai'i State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Support of HB698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Daya Green, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

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- Elevating cruelty to animals in the first degree to a Class B felony.
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- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.
- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,

Daya Green

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 9:29:56 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jerry Wolfe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

HB698 is a critical step in protecting both animals and our broader community by increasing penalties for animal cruelty offenses. Key provisions of this measure include:

- Elevating cruelty to animals in the first degree to a Class B felony.
- Making cruelty to animals in the second degree a Class B felony if the offense involves the death of an animal or ten or more animals.
- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.
- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,

Jerry Wolfe

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 9:33:05 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Taylor Jackson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe animal cruelty should be a criminal offense. Not sure why it has taken Hawai'i so long to get with the program.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 9:35:17 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cheira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill 100%

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 9:42:11 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert Morita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a committed advocate for animal welfare and a steadfast supporter of local rescue organizations, I submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 698. This critical legislation represents a pivotal step in strengthening Hawai‘i’s animal cruelty laws and ensuring greater protections for the most vulnerable members of our communities.

Every day, animal rescue organizations across the state work tirelessly to save, rehabilitate, and find loving homes for abused, neglected, and abandoned animals. As compassionate citizens, we donate, volunteer, foster, and raise awareness—but these efforts alone are not enough. We need stronger legal safeguards to prevent cruelty before it occurs and to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

The increasing instances of animal cruelty in Hawai‘i are deeply distressing. We have all witnessed or heard of heartbreaking cases—animals left to suffer from starvation, abuse, and abandonment, often with little to no repercussions for those responsible. HB 698 not only seeks to impose stricter penalties for such offenses but also acknowledges the well-documented link between animal abuse and other forms of violence, including domestic abuse. By enacting this bill, we take a meaningful step toward fostering a safer and more compassionate society for both animals and people.

I urge you to support and pass HB 698, providing much-needed legal reinforcement for Hawai‘i’s animals and the dedicated organizations fighting to protect them. These groups cannot shoulder this burden alone—legislative action is essential to creating lasting change.

Mahalo for your time, consideration, and commitment to making Hawai‘i a place where all beings are treated with kindness and respect.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 9:45:38 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heide Kila	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Heide Kila

Waianae, HI 96792

Feb.19,2025

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Hawai‘i State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Support of HB698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Heide Kila , and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarmingly, Hawai‘i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

HB698 is a critical step in protecting both animals and our broader community by increasing penalties for animal cruelty offenses. Key provisions of this measure include:

- Elevating cruelty to animals in the first degree to a Class B felony.
- Making cruelty to animals in the second degree a Class B felony if the offense involves the death of an animal or ten or more animals.
- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.

- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,

Heide Kila  
Papa Laulauz LLC Owner

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 10:05:16 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Maya Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Hawai‘i House Bill 698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty  
February 19, 2025

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs (JHA)  
Hawai‘i State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,  
I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 698, which seeks to strengthen protections against animal cruelty in Hawai‘i. This bill is a crucial step forward in ensuring the safety and well-being of animals and holding individuals accountable for inhumane treatment. Animal cruelty is a moral issue and a public safety concern. Research has consistently shown a link between violence toward animals and violence toward people, making it imperative that we take meaningful action to prevent and address such acts. By enhancing penalties for acts of cruelty and closing legal loopholes, HB 698 will provide greater deterrence against mistreatment and reinforce Hawai‘i’s commitment to ethical and humane treatment of animals. Hawai‘i has long been known for its deep cultural respect for all living beings. Strengthening our animal cruelty laws aligns with these values and ensures that our state continues to set a standard for compassion and responsibility.

I urge you to pass HB 698 and stand in defense of those who cannot speak for themselves.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Maholo Nui,

Maya Young

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 10:28:47 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Renee Harada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the JHA Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB698 and urge the passing of this critical legislation. Animal cruelty is an injustice that has no place in our society and Hawaii needs to strengthen our stance on these reprehensible acts and behaviors. We are shamefully archaic in legislation and enforcement of these crimes.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 10:31:23 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Stacy Tsui	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB 698. We need to protect have laws in place to hold people accountable. Animals are at the mercy of people and often times these people mistreat animals with horrible suffering and cruelty. I see many instances where these people get a slap in the wrist for their behavior. The pain and they inflict has no consequences. Please consider this bill to set a better standard.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 10:39:29 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Heidi Sewell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill must be passed to ensure the safety and well being of all animals. They are the most vulnerable and we are their only voice. They deserve the same protections as humans do and the humans that abuse, neglect, mistreat them deserve the same harsh punishments as when another human is harmed.

There is no excuse to protect any animal abuser and our state does not offer nearly enough protections for innocent animals. These are living creatures, to most of us, animals are family and deserve better than what our current laws are.

Please pass this bill so that much stricter penalties are enacted and the voiceless, vunlenrable animals are treated with the dignity and compassion they deserve.

Mahalo.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 10:40:40 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Beth Broome	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Hawai‘i House Bill 698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty  
Beth Broome

1526 Thurston Ave

Honolulu HI 96822

970-274-8720

Killerben1@yahoo.com

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs (JHA)  
Hawai‘i State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,  
I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 698, which seeks to strengthen protections against animal cruelty in Hawai‘i. This bill is a crucial step forward in ensuring the safety and well-being of animals and holding individuals accountable for inhumane treatment. Animal cruelty is a moral issue and a public safety concern. Research has consistently shown a link between violence toward animals and violence toward people, making it imperative that we take meaningful action to prevent and address such acts. By enhancing penalties for acts of cruelty and closing legal loopholes, HB 698 will provide greater deterrence against mistreatment and reinforce Hawai‘i’s commitment to ethical and humane treatment of animals. Hawai‘i has long been known for its deep cultural respect for all living beings. Strengthening our animal cruelty laws aligns with these values and ensures that our state continues to set a standard for compassion and responsibility.

As an emergency/ICU veterinary technician of 20 years I am on the recieving end of countless innocent animals that have endured acts of cruelty at the hands of their owners. One of the most heartbreaking things to witness is a helpless animal beaten, neglected, mutilated, shot, tortured, overbred, faught or mistreated in any other way. This is an all too common type of patient seen coming through emergency often brought in by a good samaritian, and this behavior is unacceptable and inexcusable!

I urge you to pass HB 698 and stand in defense of those who cannot speak for themselves.  
Mahalo for your time and consideration.  
Maholo Nui,

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 11:23:30 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kristina Poulos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs committee

As a psychotherapist who works in private practice with children, survivors of domestic abuse, a volunteer with a local animal rescue organization, donor to various animal rescue organizations and a pet owner, I am writing in support of bill HB698. I have significant concerns regarding abuse towards animals and the relationship with abuse towards humans as well as the impacts on children witnessing this abuse and potentially perpetuating a cycle of abuse.

As a donor to rescue organizations, it has been disheartening and frustrating watching cases not be prosecuted or being procesucted with minimal consequences, including returning these animals to the abusers. A recent, very public and frustrating/sad case I donated to was for the dog named Max rescued by Hina's Legacy Rescue Foundation. The accused was not charged when there was significant video evidence and the dog died. I contacted the prosecutor's office with my concerns as I know many others did as well, and there has been no recourse to my knowledge. This lack of follow through provides a place for abuse to exist and we are better than that. Not only do we need harsher consequences, but there needs to be accountability in the prosecutors office for following through on these cases.

Most other states consider animal cruelty a felony and it is time for Hawaii to raise the bar.

Thank you for your time and attention to this very important social issue.

Appreciatively

Kristina Poulos, LMFT

**Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair  
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, February 20, 2025, at 2:00PM  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

**RE: HB698 Relating to Cruelty**

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor and I am testifying in my personal capacity in support of House Bill 698 (HB698), which amends the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

The increasing prevalence of animal cruelty in Hawaii poses a significant threat not only to animals but also to public safety, as research has shown a strong correlation between animal abuse and violent crimes against humans. Studies indicate that most violent criminals have histories of animal abuse, and children exposed to such cruelty are more likely to engage in similar behavior as they grow older. With a notable rise in reported animal cruelty cases in recent years, this bill seeks to address the issue by imposing stricter penalties on offenders. By elevating the classification of various animal cruelty offenses, the bill aims to deter harmful behavior and prevent its escalation into broader acts of violence within communities.

The proposed legislation strengthens Hawaii's animal protection laws by reclassifying several animal cruelty offenses, increasing penalties, and ensuring harsher consequences for repeat offenders. Acts such as first-degree animal cruelty, dogfighting, and harming service animals would face upgraded felony charges, particularly in cases involving multiple victims, severe injury, or death. By implementing these measures, the bill seeks to disrupt the cycle of violence associated with animal abuse, safeguard vulnerable populations, and reinforce the state's commitment to animal welfare and community safety. As a member of the Hawaiian Humane Society Board of Directors and as an animal advocate, I support this legislation as a necessary step toward strengthening protections for animals, deterring violent behavior, and promoting a safer and more compassionate community.

I respectfully ask to pass House Bill 698. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 11:31:25 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cheryl Nakashima	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairman and members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for HB698 which seeks to increase the consequences for animal cruelty and abuse, ensuring justice for victims and better protections for those still suffering.

As a resident and advocate for animal welfare, I have witnessed the devastating impact of animal cruelty in our community. Animals, like humans, deserve to live free from pain and suffering. Unfortunately, current penalties for animal cruelty are insufficient to deter such heinous acts and fail to provide justice for the victims.

HB698 proposes to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense 1. This bill is a crucial step towards holding perpetrators accountable and sending a clear message that animal cruelty will not be tolerated in our state.

By increasing the penalties for animal cruelty, we can:

1. Deter potential offenders: Stricter penalties will serve as a deterrent to those who might consider harming animals.
2. Ensure justice for victims: animals that have suffered abuse deserve justice, and harsher penalties will help achieve that.
3. Protect vulnerable animals: Enhanced legal protections will help safeguard animals that are still at risk of abuse.

i urge you to pass HB698 to demonstrate our commitment to protecting animals and ensuring that justice is served for those who have suffered. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Cheryl



Date: Feb. 19, 2025

To: Chair Rep. David Tarnas  
Vice Chair Rep. Mahina Poepoe  
and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Submitted By: Harold Han, Senior Manager of Field Operations & Response  
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2211  
Honolulu Police Department, Special Police, Badge #2706

RE: Testimony in support of HB 698: Relating to Animal Cruelty  
Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025, 2 p.m., Room 325 & Videoconference

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Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Committee Members,

Thank you for considering my support for House Bill 698, which amends the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

I have managed the field services team at the Hawaiian Humane Society for more than nine years. Prior to working in animal welfare, I was an officer with the Honolulu Police Department for 15 years.

As the organization tasked with animal law enforcement on O'ahu, Hawaiian Humane struggles with the judicial system's failure to take animal cruelty seriously. The public is also frustrated with what it sees as an inadequate law enforcement response. This measure is a step in the right direction.

Just this years and last, six (6) animal cruelty cases were dismissed in court despite strong probable cause and evidence. In one case a female was seen beating her dog and it was caught on video. This owner got her dog back after pleading no contest.

In another case a male cat owner threw his cat against the wall causing significant injuries. After waiving his Miranda rights he admitted to what he done. This case was just recently dismissed in court.

This is a pattern that dates back years.

In July 2017, James Montgomery plead no-contest to cruelty 1<sup>st</sup> 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 nine months in jail in the 2017 case, has completed probation and can own animals again.

Heather Maynard's 2 dogs were found after a 100 foot fall off the Ka'ena point trail killed one and severely injured the other. She left the scene at 10 a.m. and made no attempt to rescue the animals or call 911. The dogs were found by hikers at about 1 p.m. Maynard plead no contest to two counts of cruelty 2<sup>nd</sup>, a misdemeanor, and two counts of animal desertion, a class C-felony. She was sentenced to 24 hours of community service at the Hawaiian Humane Society and a \$400 fine.

The largest animal rescue in Hawaiian Humane's history involved 330 dogs and 8 small mammals seized from atrocious conditions at a Waianae property owned by David "Lanny" Moore and his mother June Moore. Charged with Cruelty 2<sup>nd</sup>, a class C-felony, David Moore was found guilty via bench trial and sentenced to one year in prison and \$39,450 in restitution. June Moore received probation. David Moore remains free amid ongoing appeals and no restitution has been paid. The actual cost to Hawaiian Humane for caring for the animals was more than \$850,000.

Steven Boos was charged with misdemeanor Cruelty 2<sup>nd</sup> for abusing a small terrier over a period of 1-1/2 years causing multiple fractures and requiring a pelvis implant and rear leg amputation. The dog has ongoing medical issues. Boos admitted guilt in an interview and waived his Miranda rights. He was sentenced to 30 days in jail but fled the state. After being apprehended trying to cross into Canada, he was extradited and sentenced to 1 year in prison, which he served.

Animal cruelty cases must meet the same high burdens of proof required to prosecute any crime and they come with unique complications. The victims cannot speak for themselves, the acts often take place behind closed doors, and most would-be witnesses know – and many times fear – the perpetrators. When animal cruelty does yield sufficient evidence to warrant a trial, the state must ensure that justice is done for the voiceless victims.

I urge you to pass HB 698, with an immediate effective date and enable a proportionate response to this kind of abuse.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Testimony in Support of Hawai'i House Bill 698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Dana De Silva  
91-1010 Kaipalaoa St. #5605  
Ewa Beach, HI 96706  
honudtk47@yahoo.com  
February 19, 2025

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs (JHA)  
Hawai'i State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing today as a board member and Operations Manager of Hina's Legacy Rescue Foundation and a dedicated advocate for animal welfare. I have witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of weak animal cruelty laws in our state, and I am urging you to pass House Bill 698 to finally bring justice to the voiceless victims of abuse.

Every day, our rescue—along with many others across Hawai'i—works to save animals who have been beaten, starved, neglected, and discarded like trash. Some of them are lucky enough to survive and find loving homes. Others, like Max and Ceasar, never got that chance.

Max was a sweet soul who suffered at the hands of his owner for years. He endured unimaginable physical abuse and neglect, with his body failing under the weight of prolonged abuse. We gathered undeniable evidence—video footage, witness statements, and documentation of his suffering—and presented it to the courts, believing that justice would finally be served. But instead, his case was dismissed, his abusers faced no consequences, and Max's suffering was ignored by the very system meant to protect him. Though he experienced love in his final moments, he ultimately succumbed to the very cruelty this bill seeks to prevent.

Then there's Ceasar, a dog who had already endured enough hardship before he was brutally attacked by an unstable houseless individual. His injuries were so severe that despite every effort to save him, he died from the brutality of his wounds. The person who did this walked away without any repercussions. What message does that send? That animals' lives do not matter? That their suffering is not worth our justice system's time?

Hawai'i's current animal cruelty laws failed both Max and Ceasar. Under HB 698, cases like theirs would have had the chance at true justice. This bill ensures that acts of severe cruelty, especially those resulting in death, are treated as the serious crimes they are.

Key provisions of HB 698 will:

- Increase penalties for first-degree animal cruelty, making it a Class B felony, which means stronger sentences and fines for abusers.
- Expand second-degree animal cruelty laws to elevate offenses that result in an animal's death or involve ten or more animals to a Class B felony instead of a misdemeanor.
- Ban convicted abusers from owning animals for at least five years, preventing repeat offenses.
- Strengthen laws against dog fighting and illegal trapping, ensuring harsher consequences for those who exploit and harm animals for personal gain.

This bill is not just about protecting animals; it is about protecting our community. Research has long shown the undeniable link between animal abuse and human violence. Strengthening these laws doesn't just protect animals—it helps prevent escalation into other forms of violence.

I urge you to pass HB 698 and stand up for those who cannot speak for themselves. No more slaps on the wrist. No more letting abusers walk free. It's time to bring real justice to the animals of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time, consideration, and commitment to a more compassionate Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Dana De Silva

Board Member, Operations Manager

Hina's Legacy Rescue Foundation

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 12:09:29 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Linda Warashina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives,

Please help stop the abuse of innocent lives in Hawaii. Supporting HB698 increases penalties of those convicted of abusing animals. Stronger penalties can stop the cycle of abuse of animals; saving animals and in turn human lives. There is a documented connection.

Help stop the violence in Hawaii by supporting HB698 and protect all innocent lives.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 12:20:17 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
camil Buentello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill. People should be held accountable for animal cruelty. These poor animals don't deserve cruelty!

Julie Lam

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

02/19/2025

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Hawai'i State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Support of HB698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Julie Lam, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

HB698 is a critical step in protecting both animals and our broader community by increasing penalties for animal cruelty offenses. Key provisions of this measure include:

- Elevating cruelty to animals in the first degree to a Class B felony.
- Making cruelty to animals in the second degree a Class B felony if the offense involves the death of an animal or ten or more animals.
- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.
- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,

Julie Lam

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 12:29:24 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keikilani Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB698.

We need to increase the animal cruelty laws here in hawaii. Too many animal owners get away with abuse, leaving these abused animals either dead, or disabled for life.

People who intentionally harm animals are proven to also be one to cause affliction and harm on humans.

Animals are very innocent and very helpful for humans in so many ways. We should be making an effort to protect them.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 12:43:00 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Charissa Toyooka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a passionate advocate for animal welfare and a supporter of local rescue organizations, I am submitting this testimony in strong support of House Bill 698. This bill is a critical step toward strengthening Hawai'i's animal cruelty laws and providing much-needed protections for the animals in our communities.

Every day, animal rescue organizations across the state work tirelessly to save, rehabilitate, and find loving homes for abused, neglected, and abandoned animals. As pet lovers, we do what we can—donating, volunteering, fostering, and spreading awareness—but we need stronger laws to prevent cruelty before it happens and to hold offenders accountable.

The rising cases of animal cruelty in Hawai'i is heartbreaking. Many of us have seen or heard of animals suffering from neglect, starvation, abuse, and abandonment, often with little to no consequences for those responsible. This bill not only seeks to increase penalties for animal cruelty offenses but also acknowledges the link between animal abuse and other forms of violence, such as domestic abuse. By taking action now, we can create a safer environment for both animals and people.

We urge you to pass HB 698 to provide greater protections for Hawai'i's animals and stronger support for the rescue organizations fighting to save them. These organizations cannot do it alone—we need legislative backing to create real change.

Mahalo for your time, consideration, and dedication to making Hawai'i a safer, more compassionate place for all.

Roy Irei  
Honolulu, HI 96817

February 19, 2025

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Hawai'i State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Support of HB698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Roy Irei, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

HB698 is a critical step in protecting both animals and our broader community by increasing penalties for animal cruelty offenses. Key provisions of this measure include:

- Elevating cruelty to animals in the first degree to a Class B felony.
- Making cruelty to animals in the second degree a Class B felony if the offense involves the death of an animal or ten or more animals.
- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.
- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,

Roy Irei

Lorena Yamamoto

Honolulu, HI 96816

February 19, 2025

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Hawai'i State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Support of HB698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lorena Yamamoto, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

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- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.
- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,

Lorena Yamamoto

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 1:02:27 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marissa S	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

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Ka'uikikaikaimalie Kalama  
Pearl City, HI 96782  
2/19/25

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Hawai'i State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Support of HB698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ka'uikikaikaimalie, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB698, which seeks to amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

Animal cruelty is not only an egregious act of violence against defenseless creatures, but it is also closely linked to other forms of violence within our community. Research shows that individuals who commit animal abuse are more likely to engage in violent crimes against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Alarming, Hawai'i has seen a notable increase in animal cruelty cases, with 73 reported incidents in 2023 compared to 58 in 2018. This upward trend necessitates immediate and decisive action.

HB698 is a critical step in protecting both animals and our broader community by increasing penalties for animal cruelty offenses. Key provisions of this measure include:

- Elevating cruelty to animals in the first degree to a Class B felony.
- Making cruelty to animals in the second degree a Class B felony if the offense involves the death of an animal or ten or more animals.
- Strengthening penalties for dog fighting, trapping, and sexual assault of animals.
- Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing animals for at least five years.

These changes will serve as a stronger deterrent against animal abuse and reinforce the value we place on the welfare of all living beings in Hawai'i. I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB698 to ensure that perpetrators of animal cruelty are held accountable and that our communities remain safe and compassionate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Mahalo,  
Ka'uikikaikaimalie Kalama

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 1:12:11 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Darilyn Thomas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Hawai‘i House Bill 698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs (JHA)

Hawai‘i State Legislature

State Capitol

Honolulu, HI

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 698, which seeks to strengthen protections against animal cruelty in Hawai‘i. This bill is a crucial step forward in ensuring the safety and well-being of animals and holding individuals accountable for inhumane treatment.

Animal cruelty is a moral issue and a public safety concern. Research has consistently shown a link between violence toward animals and violence toward people, making it imperative that we take meaningful action to prevent and address such acts. By enhancing penalties for acts of cruelty and closing legal loopholes, HB 698 will provide greater deterrence against mistreatment and reinforce Hawai‘i’s commitment to ethical and humane treatment of animals.

Hawai‘i has long been known for its deep cultural respect for all living beings. Strengthening our animal cruelty laws aligns with these values and ensures that our state continues to set a standard for compassion and responsibility.

I urge you to pass HB 698 and stand in defense of those who cannot speak for themselves. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Maholo Nui,

Darilyn

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 1:12:43 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Please support HB698.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to present my testimony.

Sincerely,

Andrea Quinn

Kihei, Maui

## Testimony in Support of Hawai‘i House Bill 698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

### **Randi Levinthol**

1737 Kaehulua Pl.  
Kapaa, HI 96746  
rlevinthol@yahoo.com  
2/19/2025

### **Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs (JHA)**

Hawai‘i State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI

### **Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,**

I am writing to express my **strong support** for **House Bill 698**, which seeks to strengthen protections against animal cruelty in Hawai‘i. This bill is a crucial step forward in ensuring the safety and well-being of animals and holding individuals accountable for inhumane treatment.

Animal cruelty is a moral issue and a public safety concern. Research has consistently shown a link between violence toward animals and violence toward people, making it imperative that we take meaningful action to prevent and address such acts. By **enhancing penalties for acts of cruelty** and **closing legal loopholes**, HB 698 will provide greater deterrence against mistreatment and reinforce Hawai‘i’s commitment to ethical and humane treatment of animals.

Hawai‘i has long been known for its deep cultural respect for all living beings. Strengthening our animal cruelty laws aligns with these values and ensures that our state continues to set a standard for compassion and responsibility.

I urge you to pass **HB 698** and stand in defense of those who cannot speak for themselves. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

**Maholo Nui,**

Randi Levinthol

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 1:32:12 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aimee Cusimano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are long overdue for a harsher penalty system for animal cruelty. There is longstanding evidence that people who harm animals are also more likely to commit offense against other human beings. This will provide a way to deter these crimes before they happen. This will also provide safety to numerous animals and people. It's the duty of the government to safeguard the well being of its citizens and this is a simple way to do this. We also have a duty to protect those who cannot speak for themselves. Please increase the categories of offense for animal cruelty cases and make our community safer.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 1:35:40 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kasey Tabar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong Support

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 1:44:31 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Hawai'i House Bill 698 – Relating to Animal Cruelty

Jennifer Mavilia  
531 B kawaioloa rd  
Kailua hi 96734

[jleemavilia@yahoo.com](mailto:jleemavilia@yahoo.com)

2/19/2025

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs (JHA)  
Hawai'i State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

The community needs more than this. Please do what's right and give a voice to an issue we all know is morally wrong. Make the cracks the sociopaths slip through in the justice system a little bit smaller by supporting this bill.

I have been involved in dozens of Situations where HPD claims their hands are tied. We can do better.

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 698, which seeks to strengthen protections against animal cruelty in Hawai'i. This bill is a crucial step forward in ensuring the safety and well-being of animals and holding individuals accountable for inhumane treatment.

Animal cruelty is a moral issue and a public safety concern. Research has consistently shown a link between violence toward animals and violence toward people, making it imperative that we take meaningful action to prevent and address such acts. By enhancing penalties for acts of cruelty and closing legal loopholes, HB 698 will provide greater deterrence against mistreatment and reinforce Hawai'i's commitment to ethical and humane treatment of animals.

I have personally witnessed and encountered more than three dozen counts of animal cruelty to a horrific degree. I have been involved in the most gruesome rescue cases you could imagine and they all end the same. With no repercussions. We need justice for the animals by holding humans accountable. Law enforcement agrees, but claims their hands are tied by red tape and legislation. We need a backbone. Do the right thing and support this bill and ban backyard breeding while you're at it.

Hawai'i has long been known for its deep cultural respect for all living beings. Strengthening our animal cruelty laws aligns with these values and ensures that our state continues to set a standard for compassion and responsibility.

I urge you to pass HB 698 and stand in defense of those who cannot speak for themselves. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Maholo Nui,

Jennifer Mavilia

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 1:49:56 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
jaclyn lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the increase of penalties for animal abusers. Increase this category of offense for animal abusers.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 2:39:35 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rick Collins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important legislation to protect our animals and community. Mahalo, Rick Collins

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 4:17:14 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kristin Davidson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB698

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 5:20:43 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elijah Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB698. We must amend the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense. The animals need a voice. They do not deserve to be treated with abuse such as torture, endure suffering or pain. Dogs and cats deserve to live without fear and must get justice! Justice for Max!

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 6:59:43 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laura Safranski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We should all feel shame, this is the "Aloha State" but that's impossible to claim with the animal cruelty that happens here.. it's truly sickening -it's somewhat traumatic with the # of abuse cases that i've seen - almost every other day I see an animal that is seriously abused, malnourished or actually being beaten on the side of Farrington Hwy, Many neighbors have dogs who are skin and bones, their chains weigh more than them..

There are many underlying issues but we need to be tougher on this. If someone is comfortable doing heinous things to animals, our children and Kupuna are next...

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 7:06:41 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cynthia Conrad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass HB698 and impose these changes to the law:

- Upgrade cruelty to animals in the first degree to a Class B felony.
- Make cruelty to animals in the second degree a Class B felony if it involves the death of an animal or ten or more animals.
- Increase penalties for dog fighting, cock fighting, illegal trapping, and sexual assault of animals.
- Ban convicted offenders from owning animals for at least five years.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 8:07:13 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kathrin Atnafu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I have seen a rise in animal cruelty all over the island. I go hiking a lot and come across starved and severely hurt hunting dogs all the time. How is that acceptable? It is so hard to catch those dogs out in the woods because they are so afraid of you. Starving those dogs to make them better hunting animals is animal cruelty and we who enjoy the nature and outdoors have to get our hearts ripped out looking at these dogs, many times not able to help them. It is not ok to think this is ok. This is cruelty in its worst form. When you try and talk to the owners they can get very aggressive and mean to you. It's Hawaiian culture they say but not every culture is good. Look at what happened with the fireworks.

I'm begging you to help the dogs by punishing people for animal cruelty. We are a developed nation. This should happen!!

Thank you

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 8:43:55 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joli Kenney	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB698. I have witnessed first hand how cruel acts to animals leads to cruel acts to humans. I have witnessed young children that are encouraged by family and friends to hurt animals for profit, grow to become violent towards innocent people in their communities. Research also shows how cruelty to animals can lead to antisocial behaviors, increased crime, and even homicide.

Please stop the unnecessary neglect, abuse, and pain and suffering of these gentle creatures. And help us make Hawaii a safer place again.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 12:05:29 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
eva marie kelnhofer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

i am in support for stronger laws to stop animal abuse. The abuse in this state is out of control people need to held accountable for there actions.

Mahalo

Eva Marie Kelnhofer

Aiea, Hi

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 7:36:16 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sunshine Eckstrom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB698. The morality of a society is reflected in how it treats its animals. They are at the mercy of humans and should be strongly protected. People who abuse animals are cowards who hurt those who can't ask for help and can't report these crimes against them. By strengthening animal cruelty laws and enforcing them to better protect vulnerable animals, we can make our community a safer place for everyone. Thank you.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 8:52:05 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Duane Lum	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Duane Lum Oppose HB698 due to the fact that this not only encompasses law abiding citizens like me who raise Poultry as a means to feed my family and as a Cultural Practice and feel it goes against our Constitutional and Cultural Rights as an American Citizen!

I Duane Lum oppose HB698

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 9:46:10 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kale	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB698 to increase penalties for offenders who abuse animals. It is my belief the addition of increased fines, terms of imprisonment and prohibiting offenders from owning animals for 5 years is a just start.

I have witnessed the effects of crimes against animals from offenders who additionally violate and abuse women and children, including the SA of dogs. These vile acts are on the rise and must be taken seriously. They are not isolated incidences.

One of the many cases I worked on was a severely abused puppy with 4 broken legs from the months-long beatings inflicted by a habitual abuser. The offender was also discovered abusing his girlfriend and her 4 year old child, prompting investigations by child protective services.

I respectfully urge you to consider approving this measure to increase protections for animals and increased penalties against offenders.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 10:16:18 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Natalie Santiago	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please stop animal cruelty. More awareness is necessary.

Mahalo

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 10:42:34 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katherine Fryer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB698, which recategorizes the legal definition of animal cruelty offenses to allow for stronger, more meaningful consequences. Animals are thinking, feeling beings who deserve our care and respect. Our state's recent increase in cases of animal cruelty is unacceptable, and likely indicates a more general increase in violence. Studies show a clear connection between animal abuse and violence against human beings, especially children, the elderly, and those of us in oppressed or vulnerable demographics.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 11:28:56 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
joseph simpliciano	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill seems all over the place, there needs to be verbiage for invasive feral animals as listed by the Hawai'i invasive species council and DLNR because people have been turning a blind eye to our federally protected bird species as invasive feral cats have been killing them every year with no punishment, fines or jail to the people who are creating invasive feral cat colonies in our public parks and beaches both state and city. This bill needs to be stronger because if we are allowing people to say let the invasive species go because a federally protected bird like the Ua'u is a good source then people need to be held accountable for their actions. This has been happening year after year with DOFAW and right in my backyard of Waianae at Kū'ilioloa Heiau. Please make this bill make sense and not create a loophole where people can continue to break multiple laws in regards to protecting our native species. It should always be protected species over invasive.

**HB-698**

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 12:42:44 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James K. Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill