
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ANIMAL CRUELTY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that animal cruelty
2 offenders are a threat to the health and safety of all members
3 of our communities, especially vulnerable populations. Recent
4 research has shown that animal cruelty is a predictive and
5 co-occurring crime with violence against humans, including
6 children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Psychological
7 studies show that seventy per cent of violent criminals began by
8 abusing animals. Children who witness animal abuse are also
9 more likely to abuse animals as teenagers and adults.

10 The legislature also finds that there has been a
11 significant increase in animal cruelty cases in the State over
12 the past five years, especially cases involving pet animals.
13 According to the Honolulu police department, there were seventy-
14 three animal cruelty crimes in 2023 compared to fifty-eight in
15 2018. Inadequate punishment for these offenses has caused
16 outrage in the community, leading to protests demanding that
17 these crimes be taken more seriously.



1 The legislature further finds that people have particularly
2 deep bonds with pet animals. In a 2024 survey conducted on O'ahu
3 by Ward Research, ninety-four per cent of all households agreed
4 that animal companionship is important to quality of life.
5 Nationally, ninety-seven per cent of pet owners consider pets to
6 be part of their family.

7 The legislature concludes that the prevalence of animal
8 cruelty crimes in the State and its correlation with other
9 serious violent crimes warrants increased penalties for the most
10 egregious offenses against pet animals. Stronger penalties will
11 help deter and prevent animal cruelty and ensure that those
12 responsible face appropriate consequences.

13 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to increase the
14 criminal penalties for the offenses of cruelty to animals in the
15 first and second degrees for situations that involve pet
16 animals.

17 SECTION 2. Section 711-1108.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
18 amended by amending subsection (5) to read as follows:

19 "(5) Cruelty to animals in the first degree [~~is~~] shall be
20 a class C felony[-]; provided that if the offense involves a pet
21 animal, cruelty to animals in the first degree shall be a class



1 B felony. In addition to any fines and imprisonment imposed
2 under this section, any person convicted under this section
3 shall be prohibited from possessing or owning any pet animal or
4 equine animal for a minimum of five years from the date of
5 conviction."

6 SECTION 3. Section 711-1109, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
7 amended by amending subsection (4) to read as follows:

8 "(4) Cruelty to animals in the second degree [~~is~~] shall be
9 a misdemeanor[~~, except~~]; provided that if the offense involves
10 ten or more pet animals in any one instance[~~, then~~] or the death
11 of a pet animal, cruelty to animals in the second degree [~~is~~]
12 shall be a class [C] B felony. In addition to any other
13 penalties imposed, the person shall be prohibited from
14 possessing or owning any pet animal for a minimum of five years
15 from the date of conviction."

16 SECTION 4. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
17 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
18 begun before its effective date.

19 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
20 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

21 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



Report Title:

Penal Code; Animal Cruelty; Pet Animals; Penalties

Description:

Increases the criminal penalties for the offenses of cruelty to animals in the first and second degree that involve pet animals.
(Proposed SD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

