



NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

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Senate Majority Passes Legislation in Honor of Animal Advocacy Day

(Albany, NY) Today, the Senate Democratic Majority passed legislation to further protect animal welfare and strengthen rules around the sale and treatment of pets. This package coincides with Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month, and makes a concerted effort to elevate the humane treatment and wellbeing of those who can't advocate for themselves. These measures build on the longstanding legacy of the Senate Democratic Conference to extend dignity and compassion to all throughout our state.

The proposed legislation includes provisions that would strengthen anti-slaughter laws; restrict animal devocalization to instances of medical necessity; require the prompt inspection of abandoned properties for abandoned animals; clarify the law on aggravated cruelty towards animals; enact "Tucker's Law"; expand and strengthen the sale of exotic animals ban; enact the "Big Five African Trophies Act", and would work to further enhance penalties for animal fighting.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, "It's our responsibility to protect and defend the voiceless, and that includes our cherished pets and animals. I am very proud of the examples we are setting for animal welfare to prevent cruelty and abuse. I commend the sponsors of this bill package for their dedication to clarifying laws and bolstering protections against cruelty."

Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Michelle Hinchey, said "Our pets depend on us for safety, love, and survival and shouldn't have to suffer because of their owners' thoughtless actions. I'm proud that my bill requiring vacated homes to be inspected for abandoned animals within three days of a tenant's departure is coming before the Senate today alongside a package of legislation aimed at creating a safer New York for our companion animals. Animal neglect has no place in our society, and this life-saving bill will help ensure that no animal is left behind."

The legislation passed by the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

- **Requires Signage Prohibiting the Sale of Race Horses for Slaughter:** This bill, [S6796A](#), sponsored by Senator Joseph Addabbo would strengthen enforcement efforts of the state's anti-slaughter of racehorses and racehorse breeding stock law by requiring the posting of signage that states it is illegal to sell or transfer such animals for the purposes of slaughter at all racehorse auctions.
- **Restricting the Devocalization of Cats and Dogs:** This bill, [S142](#), sponsored by Senator Michael Gianaris would restrict the practice of surgical devocalization procedures on dogs and cats to medical necessity.
- **Abandoned Animals Property Inspection:** This bill, [S6365](#), sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey would require that any landlords or lessors inspect the property for any abandoned animals within three days of a property being vacated and notify the proper authorities.
- **Clarifies the Felony for Aggravated Cruelty to Animals:** This bill, [S761](#), sponsored by Senator Liz Krueger, eliminates the word “serious” from the “serious physical injury” language of the Agriculture and Markets law, in relation to aggravated cruelty to animals to ensure that someone attempting to physically harm an animal is appropriately penalized even if the assault is not successful and the animal makes a full recovery.
- **Enacting Tucker’s Law:** This bill, [S5325](#), sponsored by Senator Monica Martinez enacts "Tucker's law" which removes the provision that provides that any term of imprisonment for a violation of aggravated cruelty to animals may not exceed two years.
- **Exotic Animal Sale Ban:** This bill, [S6211C](#), sponsored by Senator Monica Martinez provides that "wild animal" means indigenous, non-domesticated animals native to the country in which they live and "exotic animal" means a wild animal with an origin of a different continent. It would also add certain wild or exotic animals to the list of non-companion animals and would prohibit such animals from being imported, sold or owned.
- **Big Five African Trophies Act:** This bill, [S3302](#), sponsored by Senator Luis Sepúlveda, would enact the “Big Five African Trophies Act” relating to banning the importation, transportation and possession of certain African wildlife species and products.
- **Increased Animal Cruelty Prevention:** This bill, [S3431A](#), sponsored by Senator James Skoufis, would enhance New York’s animal cruelty laws to further deter individuals from engaging in animal fighting and other harmful practices.

Bill Sponsor Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris said, “A society can be judged by how it treats its animals, and I believe our companions should be treated with respect, not like commodities. As a loving pet owner and proud sponsor of multiple proposals to protect animals, I am proud to be passing my bill to ban the mutilation of cats and dogs through devocalization.”

Bill Sponsor Senator Joseph Addabbo said, “In protecting our voiceless companions, we strengthen our humanity. These bills are crucial steps in ensuring the well-being and dignity of our animal friends, and I am proud to support these measures that uphold their rights and welfare. My bill, S6796, aims to protect our beloved racehorses and uphold their dignity. By strengthening enforcement measures and imposing stricter penalties, we send a clear message that the inhumane treatment of these majestic animals will not be tolerated in our state.”

Bill Sponsor Senator Liz Krueger said, “Our society can be judged in part by the way we treat the animals in our care. It's just common sense that if you set out to cause extreme physical pain to an animal, that counts as 'cruelty,' and you should get more than a slap on the wrist. I thank my colleagues for passing this bill today, and standing up for the needs of vulnerable animals.”

Bill Sponsor Senator Monica Martinez said, “Animal Advocacy Day is a reminder that humanity's laws against inhumane behavior towards these creatures have not always kept pace with the depravity of some individuals. The package of bills approved today, including expansions of 'Tucker's Law' and the ban on exotic animal sales, elevates our standard of compassion and accountability towards our fellow beings. However, as cruelty to animals is often a precursor to future abuse against humans, these proposals not only protect animals but also affirm our commitment to ensuring both are treated with dignity and respect.”

Bill Sponsor Senator Luis Sepúlveda said, “It fills my heart with immense joy and pride to witness the passage of legislation that reflects our deep commitment to compassion and justice. These landmark measures, particularly the ‘Big Five African Trophies Act’ which I was privileged to sponsor, represent a pivotal advancement in the respect and protection of animal life. It is an honor for our Senate Democratic Majority to have spearheaded such transformative laws. This comprehensive legislative package not only strengthens New York’s position on animal welfare but also highlights our collective determination to lead by example. I am honored and proud to contribute to a legislative framework that embodies our professional dedication to making a substantial and positive impact in the realm of animal rights.”

Bill Sponsor Senator James Skoufis said, “I am proud to have one of my bills included in the Animal Advocacy Day package advanced through the Senate today. We have a responsibility to protect animals, and to reduce and eliminate harm done by humans. Among other bills in the package that ban the sale of exotic animals and the importation of African wildlife, my bill seeks to enhance New York’s animal cruelty laws to further deter anyone who would harm animals through fighting or other injurious activities. I am glad to stand beside my colleagues to advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves.”

Brian Shapiro, New York State Director for the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) said, “Our state continues leading the way on animal protection, and the Senate deserves recognition for championing this package of meaningful bills. Companion animals, wildlife and all species are an important part of our homes, communities, and natural environment. This initiative led by the Senate protects both people and animals and helps create a more humane society here in New York.”

Libby Post, Executive Director, NYS Animal Protection Federation said, “The NYS Senate has been a great partner in making life better for homeless companion animals by supporting the state’s animal shelters. Our thanks to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Deputy Majority Leader Michael Gianaris for their steadfast support and for passing this package of bills.”

Bill Ketzer, ASPCA's Senior Director of State Legislation, Eastern Division said, “From providing capital resources for animal shelters statewide, to prohibiting the inhumane slaughter of horses for human or animal consumption, to ending breed discrimination and helping improve the way our animal cruelty laws are enforced, the ASPCA is so grateful for the senate’s ongoing commitment to tackling some of the most pressing and difficult issues in animal welfare. We look forward to continuing our work with animal champions in the legislature to protect those who cannot speak for themselves.”

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