



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Tedisco

Guest Column for the Daily Gazette

[James Tedisco](#)

August 29, 2025

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The “Wild West” of Animal Cruelty Laws

THE DAILY GAZETTE

By Senator Jim Tedisco

We seem to be witnessing an epidemic of shocking animal cruelty cases.

Every week, there's another disturbing story of evil and violence perpetrated against a defenseless animal.

As someone on the forefront of protecting people and pets from abuse for many years as the driving force behind passage of the landmark Buster's Law, I've seen the research which indicates that violence against animals is a bridge crime that can, and has, led to violence against people.

That's why the FBI has animal cruelty as a top tier Group A offense in its crime reporting statistics.

A clear example of that is the individual who poured kerosene on Buster the cat in Schenectady that inspired passage of Buster's Law in 1999, which created the felony crime of animal cruelty in New York State punishable by up to two years in jail and a \$5,000 fine. This individual later was imprisoned for various crimes, including attempted rape, sexual abuse and unlawful imprisonment of a 12-year-old girl.

While we've made great strides in raising awareness of the public safety dangers of animal cruelty posed to pets and people since Buster's Law was enacted, I don't think I've ever seen it so bad as it is right now in terms of one horrible case of animal cruelty after another.

In March, two people allegedly tortured and set a pit bull puppy on fire in a crate in a church parking lot in Albany.

In July, the owner of "A Time for Paws" doggy daycare and boarding facility in Halfmoon was charged with allegedly killing a French bulldog named Gus by leaving him out in the sweltering heat.

Last week, a Wilton mother and daughter were charged with 37 counts of animal cruelty. A Canajoharie man also was charged with deliberately hitting a kitten with his pickup truck.

This week, 21 dogs died at a boarding facility in Washington County where the two owners are now facing animal neglect charges. And in Malta a couple were arrested for allegedly torturing three dogs by leaving them in a garage with no ventilation and failing to provide them with sustenance.

Every one of these cases is heartbreaking and preventable.

Saratoga County is poised to become the 27th county in New York State to have its own animal abuse registry. Fulton County just passed one last month, and I applaud the leaders of both counties for their efforts.

While this is a positive step, we need a holistic statewide registry of animal abusers as I am sponsoring bipartisan legislation for (S.1563).

In the absence of statewide action, what we have now in New York is a “Wild West” approach of uncoordinated local animal abuse laws which amount to a mishmash of wildly different county registries while more than half of our state’s counties have chosen to do nothing.

This failure by our state to act enables “outlaw” animal abusers to go to neighboring counties that don’t have their own registries to get an animal. It’s a total mess.

My bipartisan statewide animal abuse registry legislation contains the names and addresses of persons convicted of animal abuse in New York and makes it accessible to the public and those involved in the sale or adoption of an animal (shelters, rescues and breeders) so they can refer to it before allowing an individual to take ownership of an animal.

I’m heartened that many animal rescues and shelters such as the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society are supporting my statewide registry legislation.

As I’ve often said, having a companion animal is not a right, it’s a privilege, but our pets and people have a right to be safe from abuse and neglect.

What you don’t know can hurt you and the pets and people we love. That’s why we need a statewide registry of animal abusers.

Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C-Ballston Lake) represents the 44th State Senate District which includes all of Saratoga County, Niskayuna and the City of Schenectady.

related legislation

[2025-S1563](#)

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- Introduced
 - - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
 - - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
 - - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
 - Delivered to Governor
 - Signed By Governor

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[Requires each violator of "Buster's Law" to register with the division of criminal justice services](#)

January 10, 2025

In Senate Committee [Agriculture](#)

Sponsored by [James Tedisco](#)

Do you support this bill?