



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Hosts Public Hearing on Animal Abuse

PATTY RITCHIE May 9, 2012

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Utica Forum Prompted by Horrific Abuse Case

State Senate Agriculture Chair Patty Ritchie hosted a public hearing in Utica today to find ways to crack down on serious cases of animal abuse.

*** [CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO OF HEARING \(01:19:31\)](#) ***

The hearing came in the wake of an especially horrific case of abuse involving dead and emaciated dogs left in a Utica apartment, and increased awareness of abuse across the state.

“Stories of abuse and neglect of family pets are sickening, and we must make sure that our laws keep up with the latest examples of abuse,” said Senator Ritchie, a lifelong dog owner. “This hearing will help us to better understand the scope of the problem, and discuss ways that we can help prevent abuse, as well as appropriate punishment for abusers.”

The meeting was attended by Senators Joseph Griffo, who represents the Utica area, and David Valesky of Oneida County.

Speakers included representatives of Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen M. Rice, who has taken on several high-profile animal abuse cases recently, and a representative of the ASPCA.

The Agriculture Committee has oversight of proposed laws concerning animal abuse, which falls under state Agriculture and Markets Law.

Some of the issues raised at the hearing included proposals to increase penalties for abuse, as well as a measure, cosponsored by Sen. Griffo, to create a statewide animal abuser registry, akin to the state's sex offender registry, which would be available for inspection by the public.

The Senate recently passed a number of animal abuse measures, including a bill that increases the penalties for stealing a cat or dog, and a bill sponsored by Senator Ritchie that seeks to crack down on the perverse practice of animal fighting (S.6774), which is often tied to other violent crimes and illegal drug trade.