



NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

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Contact: Gary Ginsburg | ginsburg@nysenate.gov | 518-455-2415

Senate Democratic Majority Passes Domestic Animal Welfare Package

(Albany, NY) The Senate Majority Conference today will pass legislation to protect the rights and improve the health and safety of domestic animals across New York State. The bills that will be passed by the Senate Majority include legislation that will raise awareness of safety standards for domestic animals, increase the punishment for cruelty against animals, prohibits the declawing of cats, requires the installation and testing of fire protection systems in pet stores, veterinary requirements for pet dealers, and allows report for suspicious animal cruelty.

“Companion animals and pets provide us with love and affection, and for millions of New Yorkers they are members of the family,” **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. “Protecting these animals from abuse, mistreatment, and unsafe conditions is the right thing to do. The bills passed by the Senate Democratic Majority will help raise awareness of proper companion animal care and will also increase punishments for inhumane acts against domestic animals. As the new Senate Majority Leader, I was proud to create the Domestic Animal Welfare Committee and select Senator Monica Martinez as its chair, and this legislative package reinforces her leadership on this critical issue.”

The legislation being advanced by the Senate Majority to protect domestic animals includes:

- **Banning the Declawing of Cats:** This bill, [S.5532B](#), sponsored by Deputy Leader Senator Michael Gianaris, prohibits the performance of declawing procedures on cats.
- **Alert System for Pet Owners:** This bill, [S.4577](#), sponsored by Chair of Committee on Domestic Animal Welfare, Senator Monica Martinez, creates an alert system for pet owners requiring them to bring in their companion animals during extreme weather conditions.
- **Consecutive Sentencing for Multiple Accounts of Aggravated Cruelty Against Animals:** This bill, [S.5807](#), sponsored by Chair of Committee on Domestic Animal Welfare, Senator Monica Martinez, removes the 2-year limit to a term of imprisonment to allow consecutive sentencing when a person is convicted of multiple counts of aggravated cruelty towards animals.
- **Report of Suspicious Animal Cruelty:** This bill, [S.3415A](#), sponsored by Chair of Committee on Domestic Animal Welfare, Senator Monica Martinez, allows mandated reporters of child abuse to also report suspected animal abuse.
- **Eliminating the Word “Serious”:** This bill, [S.2723](#), sponsored by Senator Liz Krueger, removes the term “serious” in regards to a physically injured animal to ensure a perpetrator’s attempt to harm an animal is penalized appropriately despite the success of said assault.
- **Fire Protection Systems in Pet Stores:** This bill, [S.3078A](#), sponsored by Senator Joseph Addabbo, requires the installation and testing of fire protection systems in pet stores.
- **New Felony Level for Enterprise Animal Fighting:** This bill, [S.94](#), sponsored by Senator Kaminsky, introduces enterprise animal fighting as a new felony level offense, consolidates definitions,

differentiates the levels of offense, adjusts penalty classifications, and provides consistency to the animal fighting laws.

- **Care Standards for Pet Dealers:** This bill, [S.3828](#), sponsored by Senator Jen Metzger, provides grooming, sanitation, and veterinary requirements for pet dealers.
- **Appropriate Shelter for Dogs:** This bill, [S.3559](#), sponsored by Senator Tim Kennedy, increases the penalties for failing to require appropriate shelter for dogs left outdoors.

There is a recognized connection between the abuse of household pets and abusive, aggressive behavior against other people. Animal abusers have [been found to be five times](#) as likely to also harm other humans. Additionally, a [2013 study found](#) that 43% of those who commit school massacres also committed acts of cruelty to animals. To address domestic animal abuse and recognize it as a warning sign for more serious crimes, the Senate Democratic Majority created the Domestic Animal Welfare Committee and Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins selected Senator Martinez as its chair. Senator Martinez [earned a reputation for leading efforts](#), as a member of the Suffolk County Legislature, to advance protections for domestic animals. The legislation passed by the Senate Democratic Majority builds on those efforts and will expand domestic animal protections throughout New York State.

Senate Deputy Leader and Bill Sponsor, Senator Michael Gianaris said, “Cat declawing is a brutal procedure similar to severing a human finger at the first knuckle and has lifelong ramifications for cats. I am proud of the Senate’s emphasis on animal welfare and I am pleased we passed this important proposal.”

Chair of Committee on Domestic Animal Welfare and Bill Sponsor, Senator Monica Martinez said, “I am committed to elevating and uplifting the rights and protections of those who cannot advocate for themselves by implementing policies that ensure the safety of animals across New York State. By enacting a comprehensive package of animal welfare legislation, we are not only protecting animals, but also fostering a healthier community for all of us.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Joseph Addabbo, Jr. said, “I am proud to contribute to this Domestic Animal Welfare Package of legislation, which will go a long way in protecting our animal friends. My bill (S.3078A) will require all premises that have animals for sale by a pet dealer to provide appropriate fire protection measures. This, in turn, will guard against the unnecessary endangerment or death of the animals there. I look forward to seeing this legislation, and the many other bills in this package, approved by the Senate.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Todd Kaminsky said, “Dog fighting is a billion-dollar illegal enterprise in the United States and our current laws are insufficient to deter perpetrators from the possible financial benefits. My legislation will introduce a new felony-level offense for enterprise animal fighting and ensure appropriate criminal liability for those who participate in the heinous activity of animal fighting on Long Island and across New York.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Tim Kennedy said, “New York needs to send a clear message to those who refuse to properly care for animals: there will be consequences. By enacting stronger penalties for those who fail to provide adequate shelter for dogs left outdoors, we’re prioritizing the safety of pets and equipping law enforcement with the proper tools they need to enforce this law.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Liz Krueger said, “The health of our society can be measured 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 fellow Senators for passing this bill today, and standing up for the needs of vulnerable animals.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Jennifer Metzger said, “I am proud to sponsor legislation that will put an end to unscrupulous puppy mills, protecting the health and well-being of animals by requiring adherence to a set of standards for their health, safety, and care.”

Senator Jamaal Bailey said, “Today the State Senate passed a series of legislation protecting some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers, the animals that reside in this great state. Under this package of legislation, animals would have greater protections in New York, including greater penalties against those who choose to participate in such activities like cruelty and animal fighting. I would like to thank Leader Stewart-Cousins and the sponsors of these important bills for taking such appropriate action.”

Senator Alessandra Biaggi said, “Animals are living beings that deserve equal protection against inhumane treatment and inhabitable conditions. I am proud to join my colleagues in pushing forward legislation to combat animal cruelty in New York state and ensure loving homes for our pets.”

Senator Neil Breslin said, “Animals undoubtedly deserve safe and healthy living conditions. Banning the declawing of cats, enacting care standards for pet dealers and expanding animal abuse reporting are just a few steps we have taken today to ensure animal protection. I commend Senator Martinez and the Committee on Domestic Animal Welfare in the passage of legislation that protects animal rights and prevents animal cruelty.”

Senator John Brooks said, “Our pets are members of our families. They provide us with love, security, and companionship and it is only fitting that we provide them with the legal protections they deserve. These bills passed here today will go a long way in keeping domestic animals safe from harm and neglect in NY State.”

Senator Pete Harckham said, “Animal cruelty is despicable and, as a society, we need to do everything we can to protect dogs, cats and other domestic animals. This package of legislation will ensure that fewer domestic animals are abused and that the abusers are punished appropriately.”

Senator Brad Hoylman said, “Animal abuse has no place in a civilized society. With the legislation passed today under the leadership of Leader Stewart Cousins and Domestic Animal Welfare Committee Chair Martinez, we are putting firm protections in place to keep animals safe and free from harm. I’m immensely grateful to my colleagues for their work to make New York more humane.”

Senator Rachel May said, “Pets are family members. I applaud my colleagues for making New York a more humane place and standing up for animal rights. We know that people who commit acts of animal cruelty are likely to do so again, and that animal cruelty is often a sign of other serious issues in a person’s life. Thank you to Senate Leadership for making this one of our priorities.”

Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, “Part of our job as legislators is to protect and help those who can’t speak for themselves—that includes the animals in our care. I am proud to vote for legislation that bans the declawing of cats, enhances fire and health protections in pet stores, and increases penalties for animal cruelty and abuse, among other protections. Our pets can be a great source of joy and companionship for so many families. I am glad to do my part to improve their health and safety in New York State.”

Senator Zellnor Myrie said, “Pets and service animals bring joy, companionship, and support to our communities, especially the elderly and disabled. I’m proud to support legislation that will protect our pets’ safety and well-being so that they can continue to enrich our lives.”

Senator Julia Salazar said, “I am proud to support this package of legislation that protects our state’s domestic animals. Animals have no voice of their own, which is why it’s important that New York State sends a strong message that animal welfare is non-negotiable and that anyone who owns an animal is responsible for ensuring that animal’s safety and quality of life. I especially want to elevate the experience of the millions of domestic animals who are placed into shelters or killed because we no longer have a use for them, and encourage New Yorkers who are concerned about animal welfare to adopt rescue animals and pursue political change to curtail irresponsible animal breeding.”

Senator James Sanders, Jr. said, “I strongly support the legislation today that will protect the rights and promote the health and safety of domestic animals that bring us much joy.”

Senator James Skoufis said, “Domestic animals bring safety, joy, and comfort to our families and communities. Unfortunately, far too often, they are mistreated, neglected, or abused. This package of bills gives these animals more rights and protections, and corrects outdated language that has allowed abusers to avoid consequences. I’m proud to support this package and know it will create a safer New York for our animals.”

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said, “Animal cruelty of any kind is reprehensible. I support the humane treatment of animals and am proud to co-sponsor legislation that clearly states that intentional animal abuse is intolerable. Today we are taking significant steps to protect the animals from practices like leaving them outside during extreme weather conditions and holding accountable those who facilitate barbaric dog fighting. Our focus is preventing cruel acts encouraging safety health and safety.”

Senator Kevin Thomas said, “Animal cruelty is a serious issue. When we protect the welfare of our pets, we make our communities safer for everyone. I commend my Senate colleagues for passing legislation to protect the rights and safety of our four-legged companions.”

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