

Braun, Whitehouse, McSally, Kennedy, and Blumenthal Introduce Bill to Crack Down on Animal Cruelty

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, September 16, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a major new federal legislative initiative, U.S. Senators Mike [Braun](#), R-Ind., Sheldon [Whitehouse](#), D-R.I., John [Kennedy](#), R-La., Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and Martha McSally, R-Ariz., introduced the Animal Cruelty Enforcement (ACE) Act, a bill they forged in cooperation with Animal Wellness Action and the Animal Wellness Foundation to step up federal action against perpetrators of malicious cruelty. The measure would create a new Animal Cruelty Crimes

section within the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), housed within the Environment and Natural Resources Division. U.S. Reps. Joe Neguse, D-Colo., Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., Steve Cohen, D-Tenn., and Buddy Carter, R-Ga., introduced a companion bill, H.R. 8052, in August.



Senate Animal Cruelty Enforcement Act | Photo Credit: Craig Swanson Design

“

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Holly Gann, director of federal affairs at the Animal Wellness Foundation

“Our nation has an epidemic of rampant dogfighting and cockfighting, bestiality, the sale of animal crush videos, horse soring, and other forms of extreme exploitation,” noted Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action. “A new Animal Cruelty Crimes section would allow the United States to do more to combat cruelty and complement efforts of the states and local governments in sending a signal that malicious mistreatment of animals won’t be tolerated in our nation.”

Within the last two years, Congress and the President have fortified the legal framework against animal abuse, enacting the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture (PACT) Act, the Parity in Animal Cruelty Enforcement (PACE) Act, Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act, the Dog and Cat Meat Trade Prohibition Act, and other federal statutes criminalizing malicious acts of cruelty. The new

DOJ section would concentrate on enforcing those laws and other previously enacted animal welfare criminal statutes.

“America has recently taken big steps to crack down on animal cruelty with new laws to protect animals from torture and abuse, but we need further action to ensure these laws are being enforced across the country and track our progress in eradicating animal cruelty,” said U.S. Senator Mike Braun, R-Ind. “The Animal Cruelty Enforcement Act would create a dedicated Animal Cruelty Crimes Section at the Department of Justice to help bring those who abuse animals to justice and includes reporting measures to track our progress.”

“I’m pleased to join my colleague Senator Braun to introduce this legislation to protect animal welfare,” said U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I. “We need to make sure laws related to serious negligence and cruelty toward animals are clear and enforceable, and that the Department of Justice has the dedicated resources it needs to prosecute them.”

“There is no place for animal cruelty in this country,” said U.S. Senator Martha McSally, R-Ariz. “Our bill will help stamp out animal abuse by creating a dedicated Animal Cruelty Crimes Division at the Justice Department. The division will focus on the investigation and prosecution of federal animal cruelty crimes, and be responsible for reporting their progress annually to Congress.”



Wayne Pacelle



Holly Gann, director of federal affairs at the Animal Wellness Foundation

A dedicated Animal Cruelty Crimes section at DOJ would allow for robust and effective enforcement of these crimes by designating personnel focused on these issues. DOJ already has dedicated sections on other important societal concerns, such as environmental protection, wildlife, and organized crime.

“People who abuse innocent animals often turn their violence on innocent people,” said U.S. Senator John Kennedy, R-La. The Animal Cruelty Enforcement Act would help better prevent and prosecute animal cruelty, and I’m proud to partner with Sen. Braun and my colleagues to keep our communities safe from sick people who target helpless creatures.”

Bill introduction comes after a series of cockfighting investigations in Oklahoma, Alabama, Tennessee, Guam, Kentucky, and Hawaii exposing massive illegal enterprises involved in global shipping of animals for fighting purposes, in violation of federal laws against that activity.

“If there is one thing all Americans agree on, it’s that strong enforcement is needed to address heinous acts of cruelty like animal fighting where spectators bet on animals that are forced to fight to their deaths, and crush videos where innocent animals are tortured for fetishes,” said Holly Gann, director of federal affairs at Animal Wellness Foundation. “Congress has passed a number of laws to protect animals from cruelty, but these laws are only effective if enforced.”

Animal Wellness Action (Action) is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that’s why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don’t. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Animal Wellness Foundation (Foundation) is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone

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wellness
foundation

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Animal Wellness Brands Logo



Animal Cruelty Enforcement (ACE) Act | Photo by
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with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

Marty Irby

Animal Wellness Action

+1 202-821-5686

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