

Logan's Law: The Proposed State Animal Abusers Registry



We are happy to announce that bills to establish the first State Animal Abusers registry in the United States have been introduced in the Michigan House of Representatives. Currently, only three counties in New York state have a mandatory database where persons convicted of the crime of animal abuse or neglect must register. Michigan would become the first state to enact such a law.

This is a bipartisan effort that we hope will gather broad grassroots support from animal lovers across the state of Michigan.

House Bill 4534 is sponsored by Representative Paul Muxlow, a Republican from the 83rd District. House Bill 4535 is sponsored by Representative Harvey Santana, a Democrat from the 9th District.

Together, the bills would establish a statewide registry to protect animals from abuse and neglect. Any person convicted of a crime against an animal would have to register for a five-year period. All citizens would have access to the registry and could make sure that no pet they are selling or offering for adoption would go to a convicted animal abuser. Animal shelters would be mandated to use the registry before letting any of their animals be adopted.

The registry would be paid for by the fees attached to the penalties for those convicted of animal abuse or neglect. A detailed FAQ is enclosed here.



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Frequently Asked Questions

1. Q. What constitutes animal abuse under your bill?

A. Killing, torturing, maiming, poisoning or disfiguring an animal with a spine. Bestiality also would be considered a crime. Animal fighting or using animals as targets apart from hunting would be considered a crime.

2. Q. What about simple neglect of an animal? Is that part of your bill?

A. YES. Failure to feed, or properly care for an animal you own resulting in damage or death would be included.

3. Q. What about someone who abandons an animal? Would that be included?

A. YES. If they willfully abandon the animal they would be included.

4. Q. Who would be responsible for this Registry?

A. The Wayne County Animal Protection Division of the Wayne County Prosecutors office would be responsible for monitoring the registry for the entire state.

5. Q. What age would this apply to?

A. 18 years and older.

6. Q. Who must register?

A. Anyone convicted of the crime of animal abuse in Michigan or someone from another state and convicted in another state who then moves to Michigan.

7. Q. How long will a person be kept on the registry?

A. Five years after they serve their sentence.

8. Q. What else must a person on the list do besides register for it?

A. They must have a legal state ID with an accurate address and must notify the local law enforcement officials, where they live.

9. Q. Is there a cost to the person on the Registry?

A. YES. Each person on the registry will pay an annual fee of \$100.00.

10. Q. What other states have this Registry?

A. No other state has it right now although there is pending legislation in at least five other states. Three counties in New York state do have it .

11. Q. Who would use this registry?

A. Anyone could access it but the information they could look at would be very limited to the name and photo of the person and what they did to get on the list.

More detailed information would be available only to appropriate law enforcement and animal professionals.

12. Q. Who would be legally obligated to use this list?

A. People in the business of selling or facilitating the adoption of animals. That would include pet stores, shelters, pounds, and the Humane Society.

13. Q. What if my neighbor down the street has some puppies for sale? Would they have to check the registry?

A. NO.

14. Q. Is there a way to get off the list if a person is mistakenly or wrongly placed on it?

A. YES. The bill provides for a mechanism with fast action to get off the list if you do not belong on it.

15. Q. What happens to a person who is supposed to be on the list but fails to register?

A. A convicted animal abuser who fails to properly register faces a one-year misdemeanor as a criminal penalty if convicted.

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16. Q. What happens to the professional animal seller who fails to properly use the list.

A. For a first offense they would get a written warning. Further offenses could be criminal and they could get up to a \$250 fine.

17. Q. Will this stop all animal abuse cases?

A. NO. And it is not intended to. It is a tool which will help prevent some animal abuse.

18. Q. Is there a connection between animal abuse and violence against human beings?

A. ABSOLUTELY. There is a mountain of data that shows a high correlation between spousal abuse, child abuse, serial killers and a pattern and history of animal abuse. The numbers and percentages vary from study to study but there is no doubt that there is a significant correlation between the two.

"A Study of Firesetting and Animal Cruelty in Children: Family Influences and Adolescent Outcomes," found that over a 10-year period, 6 to 12-year-old children who were described as being cruel to animals were more than twice as likely as other children in the study to be reported to juvenile authorities for a violent offense. In an October 2005 paper published in the Journal of Community Health, a team of researchers conducting a study over seven years in 11 metropolitan areas determined that pet abuse was one of five factors that predicted who would begin other abusive behaviors. In a 1995 study, nearly a third of pet-owning victims of domestic abuse reported that one or more of their children had killed or harmed a pet.

19. Q. What serial killers were also animal abusers?

A. The list is long but some of the more infamous would include

- Jeffrey Dahmer -murdered at least 17 people
- Ted Bundy-who confessed to killing 30 people
- David "son of Sam" Berkowitz murdered 6 people
- Dennis Radner killed 10 people in Kansas
- Columbine High School killers Eric Harris & Dylan Klebold-murdered 13 people
- Washington, D.C., sniper Lee Boyd Malvo, killed 17 people

And many many others who abused animals as a first step towards violence against humans.

20. Q. How many cases of animal abuse are there in Michigan each year?

A. We are not sure because there is no mandatory state-wide reporting mechanism but the number could well be in the high hundreds. This law would change that, and we will have accurate state-wide statistics for the first time.

21. Q. How is the initial start up cost going to be paid for?

A. The Animal Legal Defense Fund based in California has pledged an amount of money which will more than cover the costs of the registry as estimated by a professional company which produced a study cost.

22. Q. How will the annual monitoring cost of the registry be paid for?

A. The fees collected from convicted offenders will cover the annual cost as estimated by a professional company which produced an annual estimated cost study.

Two tragic examples of Michigan animal abuse.

There are far too many gruesome examples of horrific animal abuse in our state. Two of the most infamous serve as the inspiration to Representatives Muxlow and Santana in their efforts to enact this needed legislation.

Logan was a 10-year-old Husky and the loved companion of Matt & Nancy Falk of Goodells, Mich. One night in mid-March, he suffered severe chemical burns after someone threw acid in his face. Matt tells the story of what happened to Logan: "I had put Logan in his own kennel at 11 p.m., when I returned the next morning at 9 a.m. I saw the bright red scarring on his muzzle. I took him directly to Wadhams Road Animal Clinic, where he was looked at right away. He was treated and given meds and sent home to be cared for.

Because of Logan's ordeal, Matt and Nancy have made it their mission to help get animal registry bills passed. Matt and Nancy hope to have one of the bills named for Logan, who died in 2012. The other horrific example of animal abuse is sadly even worse.

Andrew Thompson, of Okemos, Mich., killed a dozen greyhound puppies by smashing them against a wall over a period between 2010 and 2011. Through the alert actions of a neighbor, he was caught, arrested and convicted.

Sadly, Thompson could someday acquire more dogs and nobody would be the wiser since there is no system to alert potential sellers to the heinous record of Thompson. House bills 4534 and 4535 would change all that protecting future animals from predators like Thompson.



What YOU can do to help.

If you want to see House bills 4534 and 4535 enacted into law, **we need your help.** Please write or call your state representative and your state senator. You can find the names of who represents you at **house.mi.gov** and **senate.mi.gov**. Tell them you support this bipartisan effort to make Michigan the first state in the country to protect our animals with a registry.