



Best Friends
ANIMAL SOCIETY

NEWS RELEASE

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Please Help Strengthen Utah Animal Cruelty Laws
Best Friends Animal Society calls on Utahns to make torture of an animal a felony in Utah and to allow judges to issue orders of protection for pets.

KANAB, UTAH (January 26, 2007) – The Utah legislature is considering two bills that will strengthen Utah animal cruelty laws. Utah is one of only eight states in which animal cruelty is not a felony. A bill introduced by Sen. Gene Davis, S. 190, could change that if it becomes law. The bill would make the torture of an animal a felony in Utah.

Recent horrifying reports and news stories about animal abuse have made people aware that punishment for this type of abuse must be strengthened. Currently, the severest punishment an animal abuser can receive is a year in jail and a \$1000 fine. It is well known that people who abuse animals are very likely to be violent to their spouses, children and other people as well. The torture of an animal should be taken seriously. It should be a felony.

The Utah legislature is also considering a bill that would allow judges to issue orders of protections to protect pets in situations of domestic violence. HB 342, introduced by Rep. Scott L. Wyatt, will allow judges to order people who have threatened or abused animals to stay away from them. Animals are at particular risk in situations where there is domestic violence.

Contact your legislator and let them know you want them to support S. 190, the law to make animal torture a felony, and HB 342, the law to allow judges to issue orders of protection to prevent abuse of animals in domestic violence situations.

Visit <http://www.le.state.ut.us/maps/amap.html> to find your legislator. You do not need to be a registered voter.

To contact other Utah legislators in support of these bills, visit these sites for information on contacting them. <http://www.le.state.ut.us/house/members2005/membertable1add.asp>; <http://www.utahsenate.org/perl/spage/roster2007.pl>

If you would like to attend the hearings on these bills, you can also contact Tiffani Hill, tiffanih@bestfriends.org or (805) 659-3778. The hearings may be as soon as next week!

For more information on how you can help, please visit <http://network.bestfriends.org/>

Best Friends Animal Society operates the largest sanctuary for homeless animals and provides adoption, spay/neuter and educational programs nationwide. For more information, visit www.bestfriends.org.