



Animal Protection Laws in Kentucky.

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In 2007 the Animal Legal Defense Fund published its second annual report entitled “State Animal Protection Laws and Rankings- Comparing Overall Strength & Comprehensiveness.” The report ranks every state and the District of Columbia on its relative strength and general comprehensiveness of their animal protection laws. You may be surprised to know that Kentucky has consistently been ranked in the top five states in the country for having the poorest laws to protect its animals. A copy of the report can be found at ALDF.org

The worst five states include Arkansas, Alaska, Kentucky, North Dakota and Utah. The best five states include California, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, and Oregon.

In the state of Kentucky there have been a few new legislative bills introduced this year to help protect our animals. A list of a few is mentioned below:

SB 58 – This bill also known as Romeos Bill passed in the Senate with a vote of 36 to 1. Next it moves to the House for approval (HB 145). This bill would make torture and cruelty of a *cat or dog* a class D felony increasing the penalty from a Class A misdemeanor.

SB 15 -Also increases the penalties for killing or causing injury or suffering to an *animal* to a class D felony. Offenses that deal with cruelty or injury due to abandonment however are still being classified as Class A misdemeanors.

HB 42- States any person who has been found guilty of torturing a *dog or cat* shall forfeit ownership of the dog or cat and shall be prohibited from owning a dog or cat for a period of 2 years from the date of conviction or guilty plea. An individual who violates the ownership and possession agreement is subject to a fine (no minimal amount determined).

HB 77 -Would require an offender to pay reasonable and necessary maintenance expenses for care of animals involved in cruelty and torture cases; requiring a court, upon petition, to conduct forfeiture hearing and, except for good cause, require defendant to post surety for expenses related to care of forfeited animal.

These bills are a good start. Let's get them passed and then we can move on to creating more comprehensive laws to protect our animals.

Please contact your legislators and express your concern for protecting our animals. You can go to <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/> to find a list of all legislators in Kentucky. You can also sign up for a service called "Billwatch" which allows you to track the course of bills under consideration. Visit <https://Secure.kentucky.gov/Billwatch/> to sign up.

The animals can not speak for themselves. They need us to be their voices and provide protection from neglect, abuse, and cruelty. Please get involved. Together we can make a difference!

