



CAMPBELL POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Pat Kelly Chief of Police
Kevin Sferra, Assistant Chief

05/25/2021

Thank you, Chairman Tim Schaffer, Vice Chair Stephen Huffman, Ranking Minority Member Teresa Fedor, and committee, for giving me the opportunity today to address you on the importance of SB 164.

My name is Jim Conroy, I am a Detective with the Campbell Police Department in Mahoning County Ohio. I have over 20 years experience in law enforcement as an officer and an investigator.

My experience as a police officer includes over a hundred auto pursuits and foot pursuits. I have had to engage in physical combat many times, often by myself, at 3 am in someone's back yard. I have been in more than a handful of situations where deadly force could have been used.

I have responded to over 30 homicides and countless shootings. I have encountered many armed criminals, murderers, sexual predators, rapists, gang members, drug dealers, and domestic violence abusers.

In my career I have received departmental awards for the pursuit and arrest of a double murderer, a kidnapper, and armed robbers. I received an award for saving the life of an individual, and a police officer. I even received a person of the year award from the local newspaper for saving the life of a dog.

I love being a policer officer and I have many stories I enjoy telling. But the reason I stand here before you today, is to give proponent testimony about the many companion animals calls I have responded to in those 20 plus years. These stories I don't enjoy telling. These are stories no one wants to hear. I don't talk about them. They are too difficult.

In my career I have come across too many individuals who have intentionally, knowingly, and recklessly killed or mistreated an animal. I have seen animals cruelly tortured, mutilated, tormented, poisoned, starved, abused, maimed, extremely neglected, left for dead, and murdered.



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The aftermath is a horrific sight to see. It stays with me. It's an awful feeling to know that I drove by that location countless times and couldn't see what was going on behind those walls or in that back yard.

It's awful knowing a voiceless, defenseless, innocent animal, died a horrific, lonely, long, painful, and agonizingly slow death. It haunts me that animal cruelty continues because the violent perpetrators responsible for this, if they receive any punishment at all, is little more than a slap on the wrist. These individuals are not like you or I. 60 days in jail does not faze them. These are not law-abiding citizens but the dregs of society.

Because of this.....

I am here to ask you to increase the penalty killing a companion animal from a Felony 5 to a Felony 4. I also ask the committee to

- Support adding a Felony 5 for anyone who would aid and assist any person in the commission of the proposed Felony 4
- Ban the use of gas chambers to euthanize companion animals
- And most importantly, classifying the F4, F5, and M1 as a VIOLENT offense.

I also respectfully request that amendment, which precludes special prosecutors in the state of Ohio from prosecuting a felony animal cruelty charge, be removed. This amendment has tied the hands of special prosecutors who represent humane societies, and clouded the process.

Even after Goddard's Law was passed in September 2016, due to sentencing reform, these violent perpetrators (s) have spent little to no time, essentially a slap on the wrist, for even the most egregious act of torture, torment, and violence against companion animals.

For the last four (4) years I have been involved in an investigation, as the lead investigator of a task force formed in Union County, involving animal cruelty that crosses at least 7 seven counties in Ohio all the way to Los Angeles, California.



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I cannot get into the details of the investigation as a trial is approaching, but according to Amy Biechler who is speaking today, she described this case on her PAWS Ohio Facebook page as,

“The largest betrayal in Ohio’s companion animal history. This person masqueraded as an animal advocate all the while taking money and killing dogs.”

The focus of this investigation, was the self-proclaimed leader of Ohio’s No Kill movement, who stood here several years ago, while in a county position of authority, and gave proponent testimony in support of animal laws, all the while, behind closed doors, committing the same atrocities he was rallying lawmakers and the public against, allegedly.

I have worked this case I spoke of earlier, for almost 4 years now. Not one day off. Not Christmas eve, Christmas, or any holiday. Not weekends. But every single day.

I have personally put in over 14,000 hours. The large majority of it unpaid. Do you know why it was unpaid?

After realizing the enormity of this case, I spoke to my Lieutenant about the amount of work that was going to be needed to do this case. I knew, being a small department, if I asked to be compensated for the work I was doing at home, and once it was known there was a large animal component to the case, I would have been told to drop the case. My Lieutenant agreed.

It is an overwhelming case. There is so much too it. I had no choice but to put in 55+ hours a week at home on average. The details of the crimes haunt me. Bringing them to light is what drives me. I don’t know how it’s going to turn out. But I can tell you I wish the laws were stronger.

I played all three (3) sports growing up. At age 15 I knew my ticket to college was baseball. I earned a division 1-baseball scholarship and was a 4-year starting pitcher. I had two wins over top #10 ranked teams. I pitched for the St. Louis Cardinals in the minor leagues.

What I learned about myself from competing in sports, was that even though the goal was winning, that winning feeling only stayed with me for the rest of that day. The next day my focus became my next opponent. But the losses, they stayed with me every day until I compensated for it. The losses drove me.



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I love being a police officer as it is the closest thing I can get to being part of a team again. I love the comradery, working together against the darkest corners of society, and doing our best to protect others.

As a police officer, it has become obvious to me, in the criminal justice system, the losers are the victims. And the losses just pile up every day. At best, the wins are fleeting. And rare. And don't stay with me long, if at all. But the cruelty never goes away. It's always there every day to see.

I have been gifted with the empathy/sympathy gene. You may think that is a good trait for a police officer to have. But when it comes to animal cruelty cases, it is a curse.

Animal cruelty cases involve the worst of humanity; uncaring, unsympathetic, unemotional, and heartless self-centered predators, who do not care about following society's standards and laws.

These violent predators

- Prey on the most vulnerable,
- Torture the weak,
- Torment those who cannot speak for themselves,
- Kill those who cannot defend themselves
- And enjoy the feeling of power they get from doing it which makes them want to do it more.

These violent, demented, coldhearted, and sadistic predators, commit these atrocities against animals, almost with impunity because society in general, and the law in particular, does not seem to care.

These violent predators, the worst humanity has to offer, are cowards, bullies, and tormenters who hide behind the weak animal cruelty laws to continue their atrocities.

As a police officer, I do not understand the WEAK ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS.

No one likes evil people. No one likes bullies. No one likes predators. So why when it comes to animals, why do lawmakers side, with the worst of humanity?



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When I say side, I mean by omission. Bullies and tormentors are nothing but cowards, who violently and unmercifully kill animals, just for fun, because they are weak and cannot defend themselves. By omission, you as lawmakers are siding with these predators. Your letting them slide through or past the system.

Do you want these violent and cruel people as your neighbor? Friend? Around your children or grandchildren? Dating one of your children? Would you trust them with your pet? My guess is no, yet according to the laws, and sentencing, these violent and cruel individuals, continually get a slap on the wrist from lawmakers and ultimately the criminal justice system. Why?

Why does the law allow police officers to stop, detain and cite people, the large majority of them good law-abiding citizens, on a daily basis for hanging an air freshener from the rear view mirror, for rolling through a stop sign, for not using their turn signal? The courts are full of these minor infraction violators every single day. No one thinks twice about it. It's accepted.

But when it comes to the current laws, they allow the worst of humanity, violent predators, low life's who generally don't follow the law, who purposely kill defenseless and voiceless living beings, get away with little to no punishment.

Yet are we dragging your neighbors, co workers, friends, and family into court- EVERY day for minor infractions.

Why is animal cruelty not taken seriously? Why is there just a slap on the wrist? Why is this accepted? This makes no sense to this 20+ year veteran of law enforcement.

Animals are conscious beings who feel a full range of feelings and emotions just like people do:

- Fear
- Joy
- Happiness
- Sadness
- Shame
- Embarrassment
- Loneliness
- Anxiousness
- Depression
- Jealousy



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- Anger
- Love
- And a motherly instinct for their young

Not only doesn't the law protect animals, it allows violent predators to trample all over them with little to no consequences.

If animals could talk and could tell people how much pain they are in or how much they hurt, would society and in turn, lawmakers feel differently because their cries and pleas for help can be audibly heard? I believe the answer to that question would be yes.

And that's what saddens me, society allows them to be victims only because their voices can't be heard by human ears.

I hear their cries for help and I see their pitiful existences every single day. I see how life has defeated them. I see how hope has left them. And I have for way too long. I feel helpless by the law and by society's attitude towards it.

I told you earlier I have the sympathy/empathy gene. But for animal abusers I have zero empathy or sympathy for them. They disgust me. They sicken me. I find them despicable. They should be in prison for a decade.

And that is why I am here today.

This is an opportunity to start making these crimes matter. Punish these monstrous predators who currently get a pass from today's laws. These violent predators don't prey just on the weak, voiceless, and defenseless animals, they also victimize the elderly, the children, and their domestic partner.

These violent predators enjoy power and control it gives them. They are losers in life. This is their payback to society - instilling pain and fear on those who cannot defend themselves, for the wrongs these losers perceive life has given to them. These violent dangerous predators need to be taken off the streets for many years, not 60 days. 60 days in jail is a vacation to them.

The link between animal abuse, abuse towards domestic partners, children, and the elderly has long been documented by various agencies, some who may provide you with testimony today.



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Animal abuse is a pre-cursor to domestic violence and child abuse. Researchers have also linked a history of animal cruelty to serial killings and the recent rash of killings by school-age children. But I don't need researchers to tell me that. I have seen it for years, up close, that animal abusers are sub human, angry predators who are dangerous to any and all of those who are vulnerable, weak, young, and old.

Thank You for your time and for allowing me to defend the innocent, voiceless, weak, helpless, and defenseless beings that think and feel just like we do.

