



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

1255 23rd Street, NW  
Suite 450  
Washington, DC 20037  
P 202-452-1100  
F 202-778-6132  
humanesociety.org

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**Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 205  
Senate Judiciary Committee**

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Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for this opportunity to present proponent testimony on Senate Bill 205, to increase the penalty for the torture of companion animals. My name is Corey Roscoe the Ohio state director for the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) the nation's most effective animal protection organization. We provide free training and other resources to animal shelters and law enforcement agencies. Last year we held over a dozen trainings in Ohio and welcomed deputy sheriffs, humane agents, animal control officers, municipal police officers and state agency inspectors.

We would like to acknowledge Senators Hottinger and O'Brien for their show of bi-partisan leadership on this issue.

Senate Bill 205 specifically seeks to address the most heinous acts of violence towards a companion animal - intentional poisoning, mutilation, maiming and beating - by offering an increased penalty to help safeguard society. Past president of the National Sheriffs Association, Sheriff John Layton wrote in the 2019 Sheriff & Deputy magazine "Addressing animal cruelty is just one of the ways we ensure that we are fulfilling our duties to keep our communities safe."

Unfortunately, there are times when Ohio law enforcement encounter violent acts of animal cruelty. Under Senate Bill 205, when those outlying incidents occur, our criminal justice system will have a more appropriate punishment.

Violent behavior does not happen in a vacuum. Animal abuse has been continuously linked with other forms of criminal violence. Law enforcement and all levels of government are among those who recognize the strong link between human and animal cruelty and how it degrades society. In the last 5 years:

- The FBI added animal cruelty as a separate category in the National Incident Based Reporting System, classifying it as a Crime Against Society, the same category as homicide, arson, rape, and child pornography.
- The National Sheriffs Association created the first Animal Cruelty Committee and now houses the National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse (NLECCA), ensuring that the country's law enforcement



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community has the best resources at its disposal to address animal abuse.

- The Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team (JCAT), comprised of the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, and National Counterterrorism Center, determined in July 2018 that premeditated animal cruelty is a possible warning sign for terrorism.
- And, at the end of 2019, President Trump approved the first federal animal cruelty law, allowing prosecution of egregious crimes against animals when federal jurisdiction applies.

The impact of animal abuse is far-reaching and the link between animal abuse and violence toward humans is well-documented. When our laws recognize this link, our families and communities will be better protected. I urge your support of Senate Bill 205.

Thank you for your time and consideration.