



# Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association

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Senate Bill 205  
Opponent Testimony  
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Chairman Eklund, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on Senate Bill 205.

The types of harms inflicted upon companion animals that have been described by proponents of this bill are horrendous in nature and our opposition to the bill is in no way intended to condone that behavior or to give the impression that prosecutors do not believe that it should be punished. Nonetheless, we have two objections to the bill.

First, when companion animal abuse was made a felony a little over three years ago one of our concerns at the time was that offenders would actually receive a less severe punishment for the felony than they would for a misdemeanor given presumptions for community control and the prospect of facing common pleas court judges who are more accustomed than municipal and county court judges to dealing with serious offenses, and in particular offenses of violence. Based on proponent testimony that animal abuse offenders are not receiving prison time, our concern appears to have been borne out. If that is the problem, the better solution would be to remove the artificial barrier on felony sentencing rather than increasing the penalty in order to get around that artificial barrier.

Second, the penalties provided in Senate Bill 205 are simply disproportionate to the harm. There are offenses of violence involving people that would receive a lighter punishment than some forms of animal abuse if Senate Bill 205 were enacted. Again, this is not to downplay the seriousness of the types of animal abuse that the bill is intended to address. We commend the sponsors and advocates for raising awareness about animal abuse and its correlation to crimes like domestic violence. We just believe it would be wise to prioritize limited resources for the protection of people and the punishment of their offenders, and there are policies that Ohio should adopt in this area first.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 205. I would be happy to answer any questions that you have.