



Support SB 77 & SB 161

**Prevent animal abusers from owning animals and
Ensure that rescue organizations, animal shelters, pet stores and
commercial breeders all meet basic animal care standards.**

Senate Bill 77: Prevents Convicted Abusers from Owning Animals & Considers the Welfare of Animals Held for Cruelty Cases in Court Proceedings

- Current law requires that animals legally seized by law enforcement in an animal cruelty case be held for the duration of a trial, which can take months or years. The costs to care for the animals, which legally falls on the towns and taxpayers, can reach hundreds of thousands of dollars depending on the number of animals and the length of court proceedings.
- SB 77 sets up a preliminary court hearing for cases in which animals are required to be held. This hearing will allow for a discussion of the immediate medical needs and long term care and safety.
- SB 77 closes loopholes in the existing ban on ownership by allowing Courts to prohibit convicted animal abusers from owning, residing with, or working with animals. It also establishes a minimum ban on ownership for egregious cases of purposeful animal cruelty.
- SB 77 clarifies longstanding NH law which allows the Court to order a convicted defendant to post a bond in order to retain ownership of the animals during an appeal process. SB 77 simply adds a 14-day deadline for the posting of the bond so that animals are not left in limbo.
- Recidivism rates among animal abusers is staggeringly high – near 100% for certain types of crimes. State legislatures, in response to this proven cycle of cruelty and the link between animal cruelty and violence against people, are passing laws to prohibit future ownership of animals to protect people and animals.

SB 161: Clarifies the Definition of a Pet Vendor to Ensure Basic Standards of Care

- SB 161 simply creates an enforceable and equitable definition of a pet vendor as any entity that transfers 20 or more dogs, 20 or more cats, or 30 or more ferrets in a year. This would apply to animal shelters, rescue organizations, pet stores and breeders.
- Pet vendors are licensed by the NH Department of Agriculture, whether home based or within a facility, and whether non-profit, for profit or for hobby. Through licensure, pet vendors would be required to meet basic animal care standards and comply with a return policy to protect buyers and adopters.
- Under current NH law there is a broad exemption for any breeder that sells fewer than 50 puppies or 10 litters. This threshold is more than twice as high as our neighboring states and therefore makes NH an attractive place for breeders who want to avoid inspection. Only seven breeders in NH are currently licensed by the Department of Agriculture. NH's licensing requirements are not onerous, as demonstrated by the fact that over 80 rescue organizations, including many home-based rescues, are currently in compliance and licensed by the Department of Agriculture.
- Over the past two and a half years, there have been six large-scale animal cruelty cases involving unlicensed breeders in NH. These cases involved over 200 animals. The costs of care for those that survived have exceeded \$3 million and continue to grow.