

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) – ACTION ALERT

March 2014 – Special Edition! Update on bad animal cruelty bill!

HB 2587 passed out of the House committee, despite more than 100 people attending to oppose it! It has passed out of House Rules and is waiting to be heard by the full House. In the meantime, a similar bill was introduced in the Senate and rushed through the committee process. SB 1267 passed out of the committees and is also headed for a vote by the full Senate. **These bills are on a fast track and we need to stop them!**



Thanks to the tremendous outcry of opposition from animal protection groups, law enforcement and others, amendments are being proposed to the “ag-gag” bill that will remove some of the bad language, including the “ag-gag” portion! Unfortunately, the bill would **STILL** do much more harm than good for the animals in our state. (See concerns below)

We should be strengthening our animal cruelty laws for all animals – not allowing the agriculture industry to pick and choose which animals should be protected! In fact, **87 percent of AZ voters surveyed last week** reported that they oppose putting farm animals in a separate, weaker anti-cruelty code.

Important notes!

- **Only contact legislators in your own state legislative District** – be sure to let them know that you are a constituent of theirs.
- **Please be polite!** It is vital that we are respectful of the legislators – even if we disagree.
- Quick calls are best. If you send an email, please try to **put things in your own words** as much as you can.

Take action:

Contact your **three state legislators** and **politely ask them to vote NO!** (If you do not know who represents you, [click here.](#)) You can say, “Hi, I’m a constituent from District ___ and I would like to urge Senator/Representative _____ to **oppose** (when calling the Senate: **SB1267**, when calling the House: **HB2587**), the livestock cruelty bill, **even with the proposed amendments.**”

If you’d like, you can add more – but be sure your comments are polite. J Here are some ideas:

- “Although I appreciate efforts to try to fix the bill, even with the amendment, it still does more harm than good.”
- “Something as important as our animal cruelty law should not be changed so drastically without fully evaluating the potential impacts.”
- “This bill is not solving any existing problems with livestock – it is creating them.”
- “A poll from last week shows that 87% of Arizona voters surveyed oppose separate, weaker cruelty laws for livestock – and I agree!”

Your voices make a difference – these bills will be voted on soon, so please call now!

You can leave a message if you call outside of business hours – the House may vote as early as Monday (tomorrow). Please forward this to others who might be interested!

Some of the concerns about the bill language (even after the amendments):

1. Would remove most livestock and poultry from the existing anti-cruelty code (13-2910J1) and instead creates a new, much weaker cruelty law under Title 3 for livestock/poultry that is "PART OF AN AGRICULTURAL OPERATION REGULATED BY THE ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE". It is not clear which animals would be covered under this new system, creating confusion for the reporting public and general law enforcement. (3-1313G)
2. Would reduce first-offense cruelty to livestock and poultry from a possible felony (under current law) to a mere misdemeanor, regardless of how horrific the crime. Only upon a second violation for cruelty to livestock could the crime be charged as a felony. (3-1313H)
3. Would take away the rights of local jurisdictions to enact any laws that would increase protections for farm animals. (3-1313D)
4. The new meager livestock cruelty law would create a very broad exemption for "normal, good husbandry practices" but there is no definition given of "normal" or "good". (3-1313E)
5. New livestock section would create a very broad exemption for the "extermination" (not defined) of an "undesirable pest" (not defined). (3-1313E)

Key links from message above:

- **NOTE:** the proposed amendments **have not been posted** online yet, so the info below is **not** the language that will be voted on:
 - SB 1267 Bill language: http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=/legtext/51leg/2r/adopted/s.1267nrra.doc.htm&Session_ID=112
 - HB 2587 Bill info: http://www.azleg.gov/DocumentsForBill.asp?Bill_Number=2587&Session_Id=112
 - Contact info for AZ State Legislators: <http://www.azleg.gov/MemberRoster.asp>
 - Find your State Legislative District: <http://azredistricting.org/districtlocator/>