



NYSAPF is the voice of New York's humane societies, SPCAs, non-profit and municipal animal shelters as well as animal welfare organizations which focus on homeless animals.

MEMO IN SUPPORT OF A.5823 (Rosenthal)/S.5023 (Gianaris) Reporting Animal Cruelty by Veterinarians

Year after year, law enforcement is faced with mounting crimes against animals. From hoarding and not being provided proper food or medical care to bait dogs being used in dog fighting rings to tying up puppies in a plastic bag and leaving them to die in a wooded area, the cruelty we've seen against animals has risen dramatically.

Thankfully, there is one group of medical practitioners who can take a major step forward in stopping this cruelty—veterinarians.

While some of these animal crimes never come to the light of day, veterinarians see much of how people mistreat their animals just through daily visits. Veterinarians examine and treat sick and/or injured animals. They play a pivotal role in the legal process. They know what animal cruelty is. They know how it starts with denying food and water and how it can escalate. They know how to define animal cruelty and how to help prosecutors bring those who commit these crimes to justice.

A.5823 (Rosenthal)/S. 5023 (Gianaris) would allow veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to law enforcement and humane law enforcement of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals.

This bill is an important step in stemming the tide of animal abuse in New York. In May of 2019, a couple, Ellie Knoller and his wife Jessica Kuncman, were both charged in the death of two puppies just days after obtaining them and nearly killing a third. **The first two puppies were brought by Kuncman to two different veterinarians—neither of whom reported the incidents.** They first two puppies were dead by the time Kuncman sought medical treatment.

The third puppy was brought to the Veterinary Referral & Emergency Center of Westbury 15 hours after the puppy appeared to be in pain because of brutal treatment by Knoller. Thankfully, the Veterinary Referral & Emergency Center works with the Nassau County SPCA (NCSPCA) and immediately called to alert them of the situation. Once the NCSPCA stepped in, the Nassau County District Attorney's Animal Crimes Unit got involved and pressed charges.

This scenario shows the importance of veterinarians stepping up and stepping in to prevent animal crime and animal abuse. A. 5823/S. 5023 is an important first step in having veterinarians be partners with humane law enforcement and animal shelters across New York to stop animal abuse—together we can all make a difference for New York's animals.

We call on the New York State Legislature to pass this bill and help stop animal crimes and animal abuse in New York State.