



## Breaking the Cycle of Violence

We can attend hearings where those accused of animal cruelty are tried. We can write prosecuting attorneys and judges letting them know we want justice for the animals of our communities. We can request that those found guilty of animal cruelty be given strict penalties. Too often, animal cruelty cases are brushed aside by the legal system and perpetrators given only lenient sentences, if any sentence at all.

The message we want to send to those in positions of responsibility is that cruelty to animals will not be tolerated and that those convicted of animal cruelty, will be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Because there is a well-documented connection between brutality to animals and brutality to humans, everyone in a community must work together. Agencies involved in protecting children, the elderly, and abused individuals; animal welfare organizations; legislators; and the criminal justice system must share information and resources to combat animal abuse.

## What Can You Do?

-  Support legislators who support strong animal cruelty laws.
-  Recognize that animal cruelty is never to be condoned regardless of the situation.
-  Before bringing an animal into your home, make sure you are equipped to take care of the animal safely and humanely.
-  If you see animal abuse, report it immediately. Most animal control and sheriff's or police departments will keep your identity anonymous.
-  Write letters to the editor supporting the humane treatment of animals.
-  Volunteer at local animal shelters to help spread the word of humane animal care.

Thank you  
for caring!



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# PREVENTING ANIMAL CRUELTY

 BEFORE



 AFTER







## Introduction

Many of us feel that we have a clear picture of what animal cruelty looks like. Someone has shot an arrow into a cat or dragged a puppy behind a car. An intoxicated owner vents angry emotions by beating the family dog. These actions clearly constitute animal cruelty, but animal cruelty can also be more insidious. Some people do not feel that it is cruel to leave a dog alone outside most of the time as long as the animal has food and water. Others disagree. Each jurisdiction enacts laws appropriate for its community. However, not all communities have the laws they need to protect the voiceless animals within their borders.

## Laws to Protect Animals

There are several steps you can take to determine if the laws in your community meet the needs of the animals. If they don't, here are suggestions on how you can help get laws passed that will.

- Obtain copies of existing laws for your area. Ask your librarian, elected officials, humane society, or local prosecutor's office for help.
- Determine whether the law you want passed would best be considered at the local, county, or state level. A cruelty-to-animals law, for example, might be state-wide, while a law establishing license fees may be local or countywide.
- If possible, obtain copies of model laws from other areas.
- Enlist support for the law. Contact veterinarians, the local humane society, and other interest groups. Find a sponsor for the law. Begin with your own elected officials. If they are not interested, contact legislators from other districts.
- Work with the sponsor of a bill to generate publicity and media coverage.
- Seek support for the legislation from other interest groups (civic associations, tax reform groups, business forums) that may endorse the measure not necessarily for its humane aspects, but for its impact on animal control, taxes, or other issues.
- Do not give up. Changing laws is a slow process.



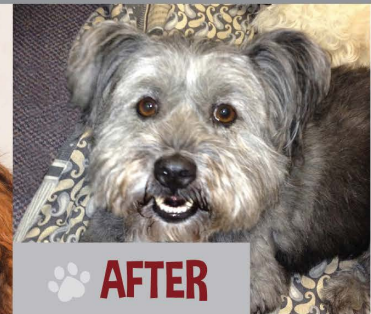
BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER

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Laws are not enough. We must find ways to break the cycle of violence. We can start by examining our own behaviors. In what moments have we acted or spoken in a violent manner toward animals and how are we correcting that behavior? Next, we can look at the behavior of others, starting with our family members. Could members of our own family improve the manner with which they interact with companion animals? We continue to move out farther from ourselves to look at the behaviors and listen to the language being used in our community to determine if animals are being treated inhumanely.

While we listen and observe, we must oppose cruelty in all its forms. To do that, we must get involved. If we witness violence against an animal, we can call the local humane society, animal control, or the police or sheriff's office.

