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COMMITTEE ON ANIMALS AND THE LAW
Memorandum in Support

Animals #35

May 26, 2026

S. 8030
A. 10826

By: Senator Skoufis
By: M. of A. Steck
Senate Committee: Codes
Assembly Committee: Codes
Effective Date: 90 days after becoming law

AN ACT to amend the criminal procedure law, the penal law and the family court act, in relation to requiring principals convicted of certain animal cruelty offenses undergo a presentencing forensic psychological evaluation and a report be submitted to the court based on such evaluation and to attend treatment based on such report

LAW AND SECTIONS REFERRED TO: The Criminal Procedure Law is amended by adding a new section 390.25, the Penal Law is amended by adding a new section 60.14, the Family Court Act is amended by adding new sections 347.2 and 353.8, as related to persons convicted of any offense enumerated in sections 353, 353-a or 356 of the Agriculture and Markets Law, or subdivision 4 of section 130.20 of the Penal Law.

THE COMMITTEE ON ANIMALS AND THE LAW SUPPORTS THIS LEGISLATION

This proposed legislation adds new sections to the Criminal Procedure Law and Penal Law and to the Family Court Act to provide for mandatory, or in certain cases, discretionary, court ordered forensic psychological evaluation and report of the findings and recommendations of such evaluation to the sentencing court in consideration of court-ordered counseling, humane education, a rehabilitation program or such other treatment which the court deems appropriate for an individual convicted of certain offenses against animals, as enumerated in the bill.

Animal cruelty is a predictor of current and future violence, including crimes of assault, rape, murder, arson, domestic violence, and sexual abuse of children. Animal cruelty is a better predictor of sexual abuse than, for example, weapons violations.[1] The link between animal abuseand interpersonal/intimate partner and family violence (including child abuse) has been documented through decades of scientific studies.[2] The connection is so consistent in the data

[1] Robinson, Charlie, M.A., M.S. and Clausen, Victoria, M.A., "The Link Between Animal Cruelty and Human Violence," August 13, 2021, *https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/the-link-between-animal-cruelty-and-human-violence* (last viewed 5/11/26).

[2] Panzer, Katie Utehs, J.D., "Washington Supreme Court Issues Landmark DV Animal Cruelty Case," Domestic Violence Report, Vol.28, No.2, December/January 2023 (last viewed 5/11/26).

and research materials that "the link" represents a euphemistic recognition of the interrelationship between hurting animals and harming other humans.[3] [4]

Not infrequently, animal cruelty is tied to an underlying psychological issue. Animal hoarding, for example, is a diagnosable form of compulsive behavior. Physical abuse of an animal may indicate a conduct disorder[5] when observed with other criteria of antisocial behavior in juveniles, like the bullying of peers.[6]

Psychological evaluations for animal cruelty offenders can help identify the underlying causes of the offense and assist the courts' tailoring specified – and, potentially more effective – sentencing that can include required counseling, humane education, rehabilitation programs, or other treatment with the goal of reducing or eliminating future anti-social behavior and the risk of harmful conduct towards animals and human victims.[7]

Over the past two decades a significant number of U.S. states have adopted laws requiring or explicitly permitting courts to order convicted animal cruelty offenders to undergo a presentence psychological evaluation.[8] As of December 2025, a total of 37 states and 3 U.S. territories have statutorily required – or authorized courts in their discretion – to order psychological evaluation and, if necessary, treatment for convicted animal abusers.[9]

In justification of S.8030 / A.10826, the sponsors' memo emphasizes that this legislation responds to the established connection (*viz.,* "the link"), between animal cruelty and future violent behavior; and that by requiring the criminal and family courts to obtain forensic psychological evaluations in animal cruelty cases, the bill would promote informed sentences and judicial dispositions that address the underlying causes of the criminal behavior and reduce the likelihood of future violence against animals and against the community at large.

The New York State Bar Association's Committee on Animals and the Law**s** supports the forensic evaluations required by S.8030 / A.10826, and encourages New York to join with the increasing number of states that recognize the connection between violence against animals and

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[3] Addington, L.A., and Randour, M.L., "Using National Incident-Based System Data to Explore Animal Cruelty Incidents that Occur with Intimate Partner and Family Violence: A Brief Report. J. Fam Viol (2024) https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-024-00684-1 (last viewed 5/11/26).

[4] Animal Legal Defense Fund, "Animal Cruelty's Link to Other Forms of Violence," (2021), *https://aldf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Animal-Legal-Defense-Fund-Link-Factsheet.pdf* (last viewed 5/11/26).

[5] Animal cruelty is classified as a symptom of conduct disorder in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manuel of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR, pp 279, 530-536; 749).

[6] *Id.*

[7] Animal Legal Defense Fund, "Laws in Favor of Psychological Evaluations and Treatment," 2025 U.S. Animal Protection Laws State Rankings, https://aldf.org/project/court-ordered-psych-evaluation, (last viewed 5/11/26).

[8] *Id.*

[9] *Id.* In 2025, Maryland, Nevada and Tennessee all expanded or strengthened their laws explicitly permitting or requiring presentence psychological evaluations following animal cruelty convictions.

violence against humans. This bill will accomplish that goal through amending New York's Criminal Procedure Law, the Penal Law and the Family Court Act, to require both adult and juvenile defendants convicted of certain animal cruelty crimes to undergo pre-sentencing forensic evaluation so that in consideration of the expert findings and recommendations reported to the court, an appropriate sentence can include a defendant's court-ordered attendance at either or a combination of counseling, humane education, participation in a rehabilitation program, or such other treatment that the court deems appropriate, in furtherance of diverting the cycle of animal abuse, acts of domestic violence (including child abuse), and continued or future criminal behavior.

For the reasons set forth herein, the Committee on Animals and the Law **SUPPORTS** the passage and enactment of this bill.