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Governor Wolf Signs Animal Cruelty Prevention Bill

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today signed the animal cruelty prevention bill at a public celebration surrounded by advocates and members of the legislature.

Act 10, House Bill 1238, was introduced by Rep. Todd Stephens, and updates and clarifies the existing animals abuse statutes and increases the penalties for abusing animals.

“I am proud to sign the Animal Abuse Statute Overhaul into effect today, strengthening the penalty for animal abuse and neglect in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,” said Governor Wolf. “Today is a day of celebration for all Pennsylvanians, and animal-lovers everywhere and I am proud to be a part of the true collaboration that helped make this landmark legislation a reality.”

The overhaul bill includes:

- mandatory forfeiture of the abused animal to an animal shelter if the abuser is convicted
- stipulations to dog tethering
- increased protection for horses
- civil immunity for veterinarians, veterinarian technicians, and humane society police officers to prevent frivolous lawsuits against these professionals when reporting animal cruelty in good faith

“Today we are sending a clear message that Pennsylvania will not tolerate animal cruelty in our state and will punish offenders to the fullest extent of the law,” Rep. Stephens said. “This is the most comprehensive animal protection bill in the Commonwealth’s history and would not have been possible without the determined efforts of my colleagues in the House and Senate, the Governor and the thousands of advocates who contacted their elected officials expressing their support for the bill.”

“The story of Libre’s shocking mistreatment and miraculous recovery helped spur a broader discussion of how we can better protect animals,” said Sen. Rich Alloway. “The result is a bill that not only toughens penalties against abusers, but also spells out the kind of treatment that is dangerous and unacceptable. Our pets are part of our families and depend on us for their care, so it’s far past time that we ensure abusers face a punishment that matches the heinous nature of the crime.”

“Governor Tom Wolf’s signature today on House Bill 1238 marks a new era in Pennsylvania,” Rep. Ryan Bizzarro said. “Act 10, which takes effect in 60 days, is literally a new lease on life for the animals that depend on us for care, comfort and compassion. “Act 10 will help put an end to instances of torture and extreme neglect that are too rampant. Our animal friends deserve better.”

“The passing of House Bill 1238 is an historic legislative step toward protecting the animals of Pennsylvania from abuse and neglect. We applaud the Pennsylvania General Assembly for their wisdom and actions in humane leadership to move this legislation forward to Governor Wolf to sign into law,” said Kristen Tullo, Pennsylvania State Director, Humane Society of the United

States. "Animal advocates from across the state and country deserve much credit as they joined forces in support of this legislation to make a difference toward passage of the bill."

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