

2025 -- S 0559

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

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A N A C T

RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Introduced By: Senators Dimitri, Appollonio, Tikoian, Bissailon, Patalano, Ciccone,
Burke, Murray, Urso, and Vargas

Date Introduced: February 26, 2025

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 4-1-2 and 4-1-9 of the General Laws in Chapter 4-1 entitled "Cruelty
2 to Animals" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **4-1-2. Overwork, mistreatment, or failure to feed animals — Shelter defined.**

4 (a) Whoever overdrives, overloads, drives when overloaded, overworks, tortures, torments,
5 deprives of necessary sustenance, cruelly beats, mutilates, or cruelly kills, or causes or procures to
6 be so overdriven, overloaded, driven when overloaded, overworked, tortured, tormented, deprived
7 of necessary sustenance, cruelly beaten, or mutilated, any animal, and whoever, having the charge
8 or custody of any animal, either as owner or otherwise, inflicts cruelty upon that animal, or willfully
9 fails to provide that animal with proper food, drink, shelter, or protection from the weather, shall,
10 for each offense, be imprisoned not exceeding ~~eleven (11)~~ twelve (12) months, or be fined not less
11 than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500), or both. If the offense
12 described in this section results in the death of the animal, the person shall be punished in the
13 manner provided in § 4-1-5.

14 (b) Any person who has been previously convicted of an offense provided for in chapter 1
15 of title 4 shall, upon conviction of a second or subsequent violation within a ten-year (10) period,
16 be imprisoned for a period not exceeding six (6) years, or fined not less than five hundred dollars
17 (\$500) and not exceeding five thousand dollars (\$5,000), or both. In addition, every person
18 convicted under chapter 1 of title 4 of a second or subsequent offense shall be required to serve one
19 hundred (100) hours of community restitution. The community restitution penalty shall not be

1 suspended or deferred and is mandatory.

2 (c) Every owner, possessor, or person having charge of any animal may, upon conviction
3 of a violation of this section, be ordered to forfeit all rights to ownership of the animal to the animal-
4 control officer of the city or town in which the offense occurred or to a humane society that owns
5 and operates the shelter that provided the subject animal shelter subsequent to any confiscation of
6 that animal pursuant to this section.

7 (d) Shelter means a structure used to house any animal that will provide sufficient
8 protection from inclement elements for the health and well being of the animal.

9 **4-1-9. Animal fighting.**

10 Any person who causes or encourages the fighting of any bird, dog, or animal with any
11 other bird, dog, or animal, or keeps or maintains any place for the fighting of birds, dogs, or animals,
12 or who knowingly permits, or suffers, any fight to be had on his or her premises or on premises
13 under his or her control, or makes any bet or lays any wager of any kind upon the result of that
14 fight, shall be fined not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or be imprisoned not exceeding
15 two (2) years, or both, for the first offense, and for a second and any subsequent offense shall be
16 fined not less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) nor more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or
17 be imprisoned not exceeding ~~two (2)~~ five (5) years, or both. In addition, every person convicted of
18 a first offense shall be required to perform twenty (20) hours of community service. Every person
19 convicted of a subsequent offense shall be required to perform fifty (50) hours of community
20 service. The community service penalty shall not be suspended or deferred.

21 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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1 This act would increase the imprisonment penalty for conviction under § 4-1-2 from eleven
2 (11) months to twelve (12) months. It would also increase the imprisonment penalty from two (2)
3 to five (5) years for a subsequent conviction under § 4-1-9. In addition to the previous penalties
4 there shall be mandatory community service.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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