

2026 -- S 2298

LC003950

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Introduced By: Senators Dimitri, Thompson, Urso, Tikoian, Murray, Famiglietti,
Patalano, Burke, Appollonio, and Vargas
Date Introduced: January 23, 2026
Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 4-1-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 4-1 entitled "Cruelty to
2 Animals" is 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 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 penalty for cruelty to animals, first offense, from eleven months
- 2 to twelve months incarceration.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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