

Assemblywoman Shea Backus
2251 North Rampart Boulevard, No. 587
Las Vegas, NV 89128-7640

Dear Assemblywoman Backus,

RE: Create **Reba's Bil that strengthens and enacts mandatory sentences for animal abuse**

Our hearts crumble as we share the tragic story of Reba, an innocent English Bulldog who recently fell victim to an absolutely appalling and horrific act of animal cruelty here in Las Vegas. She was willfully and viciously murdered; left to suffocate in a duct-taped closed storage container under the searing 100 plus degree Las Vegas sun. Reba was discovered by a passerby when they heard her cries for help. She was immediately rushed to Veterinary Emergency Group in Henderson, but despite their best efforts, Reba went into cardiac arrest and died. This has shaken our community to its core with a lot of people now demanding answers, and personally I have not been able to sleep since. Reba's story illustrates the horrifying reality of animal abuse that happens every day in our community and the inadequate legal penalties that assailants face.

According to the Animal Legal Defense Fund, Nevada ranks 46th in terms of animal protection laws in the United States, which underscores the urgent need for more stringent legislation in our state. Such brutality and indiscriminate violence towards our animals cannot be dismissed with a mere fine or temporary imprisonment. We beg of you to please take swift action on this issue to ensure that tragic incidents like Reba's never happen again. What if Reba belonged to you? You would demand action; well, we, as residents of the State of Nevada are demanding something be done about the current laws, or lack thereof, to protect our family members.

For the innocent lives lost and those still at risk, we advocate for an urgent review and subsequent enhancement of current laws relating to animal abuse. We insist on stricter penalties — both financial and penal — for individuals convicted of animal abandonment, neglect, abuse, torture, or death. Our goal is to ensure that these heinous acts do not go unpunished and to protect animals like Reba, who cannot defend themselves.

Stand with us in our fight against animal abuse. We implore you to lend your signature to this life-saving cause, demanding harsher penalties to deter those contemplating acts of animal cruelty. Our collective voice can be the catalyst for change that Nevada urgently needs! Sign the petition today.

Currently, as it stands,

Nevada Revised Statute § 574.100 makes it a crime to engage in **animal cruelty and abuse**. **A first-time offense is typically a misdemeanor** punishable by up to six months in jail, up to 120 hours of community service, and up to \$1,000 in fines.

Here are **five key things to know**:

1. Unjustifiably **mutilating or killing** a companion animal such as a cat or dog is a **felony**, carrying prison time and thousands in fines.
2. Law enforcement may impound **abused** animals and eventually put them down.
3. Potential defenses to animal cruelty charges are **self-defense**, lack of **criminal intent**, or an unlawful police **search**.
4. In some circumstances, non-U.S. citizens convicted of **animal cruelty** could get **deported**.
5. **Most animal cruelty convictions can be sealed from your criminal record within 2 years or less.**

1.3. Penalties [NRS 193.130](#)

The **punishment** for unjustifiably maiming, mutilating, or killing any cat or any dog or any animal kept for companionship or pleasure (whether belonging to the defendant or not) depends on the defendant's **state of mind**:

- If the act is committed in order to threaten, intimidate, or terrorize another person, it is a category C felony in Nevada carrying one to five (1 – 5) years in **prison** and up to \$10,000 in fines.
- If the act is committed willfully and maliciously, it is a [category D felony](#) carrying one to four (1 – 4) years in prison and up to \$5,000 in fines.

Otherwise, the punishment for a **first-time offense is a misdemeanor**, and the **penalties** get harsher with each successive offense within a seven (7)-year period. And depending on the circumstances the defendant may be ordered to **surrender** ownership or possession of the allegedly mistreated animal:

A first offense of animal cruelty within the preceding seven (7) years is **prosecuted as a misdemeanor** in Nevada carrying:

- **two (2) days to six (6) months** in [Clark County Detention Center](#) (or another county jail), and
- 48 to 120 hours of **community service**, and
- \$200 to \$1,000 in fines, and
- restitution for all **costs** associated with the care and impoundment of any mistreated animal including money expended for veterinary treatment, feed, and housing

Note that any jail time may **be served intermittently at the discretion of the judge**. However, each period of confinement must be no less than four (4) **consecutive** hours and must occur either at a time when the defendant is not required to be at the place of employment or on a weekend.

A second offense of animal cruelty within a seven (7)-year period is also a **misdemeanor** in Nevada. The sentence is **increased** to:

- **Ten (10) days to six (6) months** in Clark County Detention Center (or another county jail), and
- 100 hours to 200 hours of **community service**, and
- \$500 to \$1,000 in fines, and
- restitution for all expenses for the care and **impoundment** of the mistreated animal such veterinary services, food, and shelter

Finally, a third or subsequent offense of animal cruelty within a seven (7) year span is **prosecuted as a category C felony**. The **punishment** includes:

- **one to five (1 – 5) years in prison**, and
- maybe up to \$10,000 in **fines**, and
- restitution for the expense of treating, feeding, and housing the mistreated animal

When determining the **punishment**, the judge takes into account several factors including the condition of the animal. Predictably the **sentence** will probably be more severe if the animal died or sustained an injury.

In Las Vegas, people convicted of mistreating animals may be **prohibited** from having pets for up to four years. And if the pet **died**, it is up to five years.³

It is illegal in Nevada to **impound** or confine an animal and then to refuse or neglect to supply it with sufficient good and wholesome air, food, shelter, and water. Penalties for **breaking** this animal cruelty law get more extreme with each conviction. The defendant may also have to pay **restitution** for animal care.

A first offense within a seven (7)-year time-span is a **misdemeanor** carrying:

- two (2) days to six (6) months in jail, and
- 48 hours to 120 **hours** of community service, and
- \$200 to \$1,000 in fines.

The judge may **permit** the defendant to serve any incarceration sentence intermittently so that he/she may remain employed. Meanwhile, a second offense within a seven (7)-year time-span is a **misdemeanor** as well.

This **sentence** carries:

- Ten (10) days to six (6) months in jail, and
- 100 hours to 200 hours of **community service**, and
- \$500 to \$1,000 in fines.

Finally, a third or subsequent offense within a seven (7)-year time-span is a **category C felony** carrying:

- one to five (1 – 5) years in prison, and
- maybe up to \$10,000 in fines¹¹

NRS 202.487 makes it a misdemeanor to leave pets unattended in cars in dangerous conditions, such as extreme heat or cold. Penalties include:

- **up to six (6) months in jail**, and/or
- up to \$1,000 in fine

PLEASE HELP US CHANGE THE LAW IN NEVADA! Send a message that abusing animals will not be tolerated! **Create Reba's Bill in memory and in honor of Reba!**

For more information about Reba: www.justiceforreba.org

Sincerely,