



SCIL
Social Compassion
in Legislation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AB 829, The Animal Cruelty & Violence Intervention Act, Introduced by Assemblymember Marie Waldron and Sponsored by Social Compassion in Legislation

March 17, 2023, Sacramento, CA – Today, [**Assembly Bill 829, the Animal Cruelty & Violence Intervention Act**](#), was introduced by [**Assemblywoman Marie Waldron \(R-Valley Center\)**](#). The bill, sponsored by [**Social Compassion in Legislation**](#), will expand currently required counseling for violations of Penal Code 597 to additional sections pertaining to animal abuse, such as those involving malicious violence, willful poisoning, or bestiality. The bill also codifies language which encourages a judge to order a psychological evaluation and, if deemed beneficial after evaluation, to undergo a higher level of counseling in lieu of current mandated counseling.

“We are in the midst of a mental health crisis in California, and those who intentionally inflict harm on animals are part of it,” said **Assemblymember Waldron**. “Counseling and mental health evaluations are critical safeguards to ensuring cases of animal abuse decrease and the lives of these innocent creatures are saved. I am proud to partner with Social Compassion in Legislation on this important legislation.”

Over the past 30 years, researchers and professionals in a variety of human services and animal welfare disciplines have established significant correlations ([**the “Link”**](#)) between animal abuse, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, elder abuse and other violent crimes.

Despite the recognition of this link between violence to animals and to humans, current sentencing options for animal abuse crimes are largely punitive measures that do little to help end the cycle of



SCIL
Social Compassion
in Legislation

violence or rehabilitate offenders. Fines, jail time, probation and forced animal surrender are the primarily utilized options, but may not be enough to address the underlying issues leading to animal abuse. Appropriate mental health evaluation and counseling are essential for public safety and stop the abuser from abusing.

"When there is violence to an animal, you can bet there is or will be violence to a human," said **Judie Mancuso, Founder and President of Social Compassion in Legislation**. "People convicted of animal abuse crimes need help. This bill expands mandated counseling for animal abuse convictions and calls for psychological evaluations to help prevent the abuser from further crimes against both animals and humans. Yes, people must be punished for hurting animals, but they also need counseling with the hope of fixing their underlying emotional and psychological issues before they do it again or go on to hurt humans."

AB 829 will be heard in the Assembly Public Safety Committee in the next few weeks.