

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8659

To direct the Attorney General to conduct a study on animal cruelty, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 5, 2022

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts (for herself, Ms. TITUS, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. KATKO, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. BUCHANAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To direct the Attorney General to conduct a study on animal cruelty, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Animal Violence Ex-
5 poses Real Threat of Future Violence Act of 2022” or the
6 “AVERT Future Violence Act of 2022”.

7 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

8 In this Act:

1 (1) ANIMAL CRUELTY.—The term “animal cru-
2 elty”—

3 (A) means—

4 (i) intentionally, knowingly, or reck-
5 lessly harming or killing an animal, includ-
6 ing maiming, mutilating, torturing, wound-
7 ing, poisoning, engaging in animal fight-
8 ing, and sexually abusing an animal, or at-
9 tempting to do so; or

10 (ii) intentionally or knowingly neglect-
11 ing or depriving an animal of necessary
12 sustenance or shelter, or attempting to do
13 so; and

14 (B) does not include any conduct that is—

15 (i) customary and normal veterinary,
16 agricultural husbandry, or other animal
17 management practice;

18 (ii) the slaughter of animals for food;

19 (iii) hunting, trapping, fishing, a
20 sporting activity not otherwise prohibited
21 by Federal law, predator control, or pest
22 control;

23 (iv) medical or scientific research;

24 (v) necessary to protect the life of a
25 person; or

1 (vi) performed as part of euthanizing
2 an animal.

3 (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
4 ty” means—

5 (A) a State;

6 (B) a unit of local government;

7 (C) a State or local court (including a ju-
8 venile court);

9 (D) an Indian Tribe; or

10 (E) any other organization that has a doc-
11 umented history of effective work identifying,
12 intervening in, preventing, reducing, or other-
13 wise responding to animal cruelty, or animal
14 cruelty as related to interpersonal violence (as
15 determined by the Secretary), including—

16 (i) any organization that works di-
17 rectly with or on behalf of pets, service
18 animals, emotional support animals, or
19 horses and collaborates with any organiza-
20 tion referred to in subparagraphs (A)
21 through (D), including—

22 (I) an animal shelter; and

23 (II) an animal welfare organiza-
24 tion;

1 (ii) any organization that provides
2 mental health services to perpetrators and
3 survivors of crime;

4 (iii) any organization that develops
5 and provides training programs for law en-
6 forcement, judges, prosecutors, other court
7 personnel, veterinarians, or mental health
8 professionals;

9 (iv) a domestic violence and sexual as-
10 sault victim service provider;

11 (v) a domestic violence and sexual as-
12 sault coalition;

13 (vi) a child abuse victim service pro-
14 vider;

15 (vii) a provider of services to families
16 under the supervision of the courts or de-
17 partments of child and family services;

18 (viii) an elder abuse victim service
19 provider;

20 (ix) a community-based and culturally
21 specific organization; and

22 (x) any other nonprofit, nongovern-
23 mental organization.

1 **SEC. 3. STUDY ON ANIMAL CRUELTY, UNDERLYING FAC-**
2 **TORS, AND FUTURE ACTS OF HUMAN VIO-**
3 **LENCE.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the
5 date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, act-
6 ing through the Director of the National Institute of Jus-
7 tice, shall carry out a study—

8 (1) on the underlying factors that contribute to
9 acts of animal cruelty committed by individuals; and

10 (2) that analyzes acts of animal cruelty as a
11 predictor of future violence against humans.

12 (b) CONTENT OF STUDY.—In carrying out the study
13 under subsection (a), the Director of the National Insti-
14 tute of Justice shall—

15 (1) specifically examine, through a review of
16 scientific literature, original research, and expert
17 input, as appropriate—

18 (A) evidence-informed risk factors associ-
19 ated or correlated with individuals who commit
20 acts of animal cruelty;

21 (B) whether certain acts of animal cruelty
22 can be correlated with certain evidence-in-
23 formed risk factors (such as whether the acts of
24 animal torturing, tormenting, mutilation, maim-
25 ing, poisoning, organized abuse, such as animal
26 fighting, sexual abuse, abandonment, or neglect,

1 are associated with the same or different evi-
2 dence-informed risk factors);

3 (C) whether certain acts of animal cruelty
4 demonstrate a tendency or likelihood to commit
5 a future act of violence against humans;

6 (D) the types of violence against humans
7 most commonly associated with certain acts of
8 animal cruelty (such as domestic violence and
9 assault); and

10 (E) recommendations of areas in which fu-
11 ture research on animal cruelty is needed; and
12 (2) develop best practices for—

13 (A) early interventions that prevent acts of
14 animal cruelty; and

15 (B) interventions with individuals who
16 have committed acts of animal cruelty to pre-
17 vent future acts of violence.

18 (c) RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Director of the Na-
19 tional Institute of Justice shall submit to Congress a re-
20 port containing the specific policy recommendations, based
21 on the study conducted under this section, for legislative
22 and regulatory action at the Federal, State, and local lev-
23 els to—

1 (1) address the evidence-informed risk factors
2 that may contribute to acts of animal cruelty com-
3 mitted by individuals; and

4 (2) develop effective interventions and diversion
5 strategies for both juvenile and non-juvenile offend-
6 ers who have been convicted of criminal offenses in-
7 volving animal cruelty that reduce the likelihood of
8 offenders committing future violent acts against
9 both humans and animals.

10 **SEC. 4. STOP FUTURE VIOLENCE GRANT PROGRAM.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General is author-
12 ized to establish a grant program to provide assistance to
13 eligible entities to develop and strengthen effective detec-
14 tion strategies, and early intervention or diversion re-
15 sources, to stop acts of animal cruelty and rehabilitate of-
16 fenders.

17 (b) USE OF FUNDS.—A grant awarded under this
18 section may be used to provide personnel, training, tech-
19 nical assistance, data collection, and other resources for
20 the apprehension, prosecution, adjudication, and mental
21 and behavioral health treatment of persons committing
22 acts of animal cruelty, for the rehabilitation of perpetra-
23 tors and the prevention of future acts of animal cruelty
24 or violence against humans, and specifically, for the pur-
25 poses of—

1 (1) training law enforcement officers, judges,
2 other court personnel, prosecutors, and mental
3 health professionals to more effectively identify and
4 respond to acts of animal cruelty;

5 (2) developing, training, or expanding units of
6 law enforcement officers, judges, other court per-
7 sonnel, prosecutors, and mental health professionals
8 specifically addressing acts of animal cruelty;

9 (3) developing and implementing more effective
10 police, court, prosecution, mental health, and early
11 intervention policies, protocols, orders, and services
12 specifically devoted to preventing, identifying, and
13 responding to acts of animal cruelty; and

14 (4) developing, installing, or expanding data
15 collection and communication systems, including
16 computerized systems, linking police, prosecutors,
17 and courts, or for the purpose of identifying,
18 classifying, and tracking arrests, protection orders,
19 violations of protection orders, prosecutions, and
20 convictions for acts of animal cruelty.

21 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

22 There are authorized to be appropriated—

23 (1) for the purposes of carrying out section 3,
24 \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2023, to remain available
25 until expended; and

1 (2) for the purposes of carrying out section 4,
2 \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through
3 2027.

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