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## ***Consolidated Animal Crimes Bill Strengthens New York's Anti-Cruelty Laws***

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**New York's anti-cruelty laws need to be modernized.** New York's animal cruelty laws have been hidden away within the state's Agriculture and Markets statutes for decades, confusing police, prosecutors and judges. The Consolidated Animal Crimes Bill (A.775b/S.6643) improves enforcement by placing animal crimes under the penal code (criminal law), which is familiar, accessible, and taught to law enforcement personnel. A.775b/S.6643 redrafts anti-cruelty laws that have gone without substantial revisions since the mid-19th century. In addition to modernizing anti-cruelty laws, this legislation would enhance penalties for repeat offenders, give felony protection to all animals (not just companion animals) and require fingerprinting/DNA sampling of offenders on all animal crimes, same as with other Penal Law crimes.

**The CACB is an asset for the law enforcement community.** Enforcement of animal related crimes is often hindered because these statutes were placed within the state's Agriculture and Markets Law decades ago, creating obstacles for police agencies, prosecutors and judges who have a greater understanding of the Penal Law. This bill seeks to clarify, modernize, and restructure the animal crimes laws of New York State while addressing outdated passages, ill-defined concepts, and outmoded language contained in the current Agriculture and Markets statutes. The CACB promotes sound enforcement and consistent interpretation of animal crimes for New York's law enforcement community and court system.

**Passage of The CACB is enthusiastically supported by the majority of New York's SPCAs, animal rescue organizations and humane associations.** These agencies understand that the purpose of this bill is to promote public safety by increasing the efficiency of anti-cruelty laws. All too often, police officers on patrol are unable to use these important laws to their full potential. Serious animal crimes are often not pursued, and instead handed down to investigators at local SPCA's because police organizations are unfamiliar with the Agriculture and Markets Law, where these statutes are currently placed. Better understanding of animal crimes by judges, prosecutors and police officers will create safer communities.

**There is a link between violent crime and animal abuse.** Many studies show that violent offenders frequently have childhood and adolescent histories of serious and repeated animal cruelty. Additionally, a strong connection has been documented between animal abuse and domestic violence. Placing New York's anti-cruelty statutes under the Penal Law will legitimize the seriousness of animal abuse offences and empower our police and court systems by giving them the tools needed to thoroughly enforce and prevent serious crime.

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