698 H.D. 1 S.D. 1 Proposed

H.B. NO.

## A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ANIMAL CRUELTY.

## BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that animal cruelty 2 offenders are a threat to the health and safety of all members 3 of our communities, especially vulnerable populations. Recent 4 research has shown that animal cruelty is a predictive and 5 co-occurring crime with violence against humans, including 6 children, intimate partners, and the elderly. Psychological 7 studies show that seventy per cent of violent criminals began by 8 abusing animals. Children who witness animal abuse are also 9 more likely to abuse animals as teenagers and adults.

10 The legislature also finds that there has been a 11 significant increase in animal cruelty cases in the State over 12 the past five years, especially cases involving pet animals. 13 According to the Honolulu police department, there were seventy-14 three animal cruelty crimes in 2023 compared to fifty-eight in 15 2018. Inadequate punishment for these offenses has caused outrage in the community, leading to protests demanding that 16 17 these crimes be taken more seriously.

## 2025-2467 HB698 SD1 SMA.docx

1

1 The legislature further finds that people have particularly 2 deep bonds with pet animals. In a 2024 survey conducted on O'ahu 3 by Ward Research, ninety-four per cent of all households agreed 4 that animal companionship is important to quality of life. 5 Nationally, ninety-seven per cent of pet owners consider pets to 6 be part of their family. 7 The legislature concludes that the prevalence of animal 8 cruelty crimes in the State and its correlation with other 9 serious violent crimes warrants increased penalties for the most 10 egregious offenses against pet animals. Stronger penalties will 11 help deter and prevent animal cruelty and ensure that those 12 responsible face appropriate consequences.

H.B. NO. <sup>698</sup> H.D. 1

Proposed

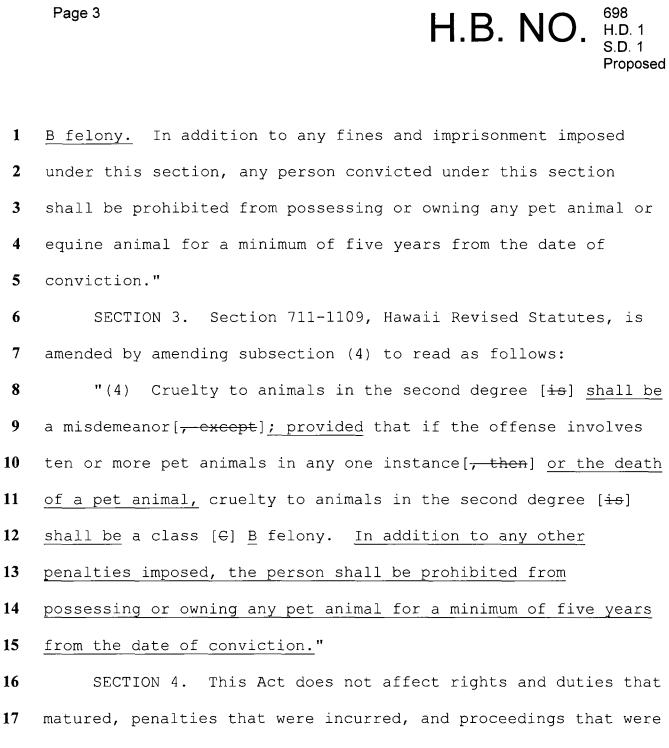
Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to increase the criminal penalties for the offenses of cruelty to animals in the first and second degrees for situations that involve pet animals.

SECTION 2. Section 711-1108.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, isamended by amending subsection (5) to read as follows:

19 "(5) Cruelty to animals in the first degree [is] shall be
20 a class C felony[-]; provided that if the offense involves a pet
21 animal, cruelty to animals in the first degree shall be a class

2025-2467 HB698 SD1 SMA.docx 

2



begun before its effective date. 18

19 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed 20 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

21 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



3



**Report Title:** Penal Code; Animal Cruelty; Pet Animals; Penalties

## Description:

Increases the criminal penalties for the offenses of cruelty to animals in the first and second degree that involve pet animals. (Proposed SD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

