

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike O'Neal at 3:30 P.M. on February 9, 2006 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Michael Peterson- excused
Paul Davis- excused

Committee staff present:

Jerry Ann Donaldson, Kansas Legislative Research
Jill Wolters, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Cindy O'Neal, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Julie Breault, Heartland Animal Hospital, Wichita
Sam Mosshart, Kansas Federation of Animal Owners
Lee Brand, Power for Pups
Dorothy McRae, Individual, Hays
Brent Haden, Kansas Livestock Association
Cindy Sellers, Magnum Force of Kansas
Pat Hurley, Humane Kansas Legislative Network
Peter Wood, Humane Society of United States
Jennifer Campbell, Kansas Humane Society
Midge Grinstead, Lawrence Humane Society
Sara Welch, Johnson County District Attorney
Chris Schneider, Wyandotte County District Attorney

Chairman O'Neal opened the hearing on **HB 2725 - cruelty to animals.**

Julie Breault, Heartland Animal Hospital, appeared before the committee to relay the story of Magnum, a black Labrador puppy, which was found in a dumpster, that had been bound by wire around it legs and mouth and had patches of hair missing all over it's body. A veterinarian tried to treat his injuries but he died four days later. She supported the proposed bill because of the horrific things people are capable of doing to animals. ([Attachment 1](#))

Pat Hurley, Humane Kansas Legislative Network, appeared as a proponent of the bill but requested several amendments:

1. Amending the definition of "serious physical injury"
2. Any act not covered in section (a)(1) would remain a class A misdemeanor
3. Take the non-person felony off grid to avoid presumptive probation
4. Prohibit offenders convicted of felony acts of animal cruelty from owning any animal for a period of five years from the date of conviction.
5. Include classification of the crime of killing or injuring police, arson, assistant, game warden, or search and rescue dogs from a misdemeanor to a non-person felony ([Attachment 2](#))

Peter Wood, Humane Society of United States, supported the proposed bill and also the suggested amendments. He stated that violent acts towards animals are cruel and not only traumatizes the animals who are victims but also the individuals who own them and the community as a whole. Thirty-five states consider certain acts of animal cruelty a felony on the first offense. ([Attachment 3](#))

Chris Schneider, Wyandotte County District Attorney, relayed the story of Scruffy, a Yorkshire Terrier, who had been set of fire, then beaten with a shovel and the kids then tried to decapitate the dog. They video taped the incident. They charged the individuals with arson and animal cruelty and obtained a felony conviction. ([Attachment 4](#))

Sara Welch, Johnson County District Attorney, stated that there is a link between animal violence and human violence. Virtually all serial killers reported torching animals in their youth. Because the link is so strong, those who abuse animals need to be identified and labeled as felons. ([Attachment 5](#))

CONTINUATION SHEET

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Jennifer Campbell, Kansas Humane Society, commented that the types of acts the proposed bill is targeting are not intentional acts but well planned out and hateful acts. Kansas needs stronger laws that will stop this type of abuse. ([Attachment 6](#))

Midge Grinstead, Lawrence Humane Society, reported that 25% of inmates stated that they did substantial cruelty acts towards animals in their childhood; in families with child abuse, 88% had also abused their animals and 71% of battered women seeking shelter reported that their male partner had threatened, harmed or killed their pets. ([Attachment 7](#))

Cindy Sellers, Magnum Force of Kansas, showed the committee a collection of petitions which had almost 80,000 signatures supporting the change in current law. ([Attachment 8](#))

Lee Brand, Power for Pups, main concern was the connection of violent abuse of animals and violence against humans. ([Attachment 9](#))

Dorothy McRae, Individual, relayed a story of horses that had not been taken care of and the individuals were tried in Colorado where they received a \$20,000 fine and 60 days in jail. ([Attachment 10](#))

Brent Haden, Kansas Livestock Association, appeared in support of the proposed bill but requested an amendment to continue the exemption of farm animals by adding on page 2, line 3, "including but not limited to, the slaughter of animals for food or by-products." ([Attachment 11](#))

Sam Mosshart, Kansas Federation of Animal Owners, supported legislation that would strengthen the penalties for persons found guilty of deliberately and maliciously being cruel to animal but also stressed the need to protect individual animal breeders from unjust attacks. ([Attachment 12](#))

The hearing on **HB 2725** was closed.

Committee minutes from February 1, 2, & 6 were distributed via e-mail. If no changes are requested March 14th they will stand approved.

The committee meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m. The next committee meeting was scheduled for 3:30 p.m. on February 13, 2006 in room 313-S.