

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4601

To establish an Animal Cruelty Crimes Section within the Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 16, 2020

Mr. BRAUN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. KENNEDY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To establish an Animal Cruelty Crimes Section within the Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division, 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 Cruelty En-
5 forcement Act of 2020".

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) There is a significant connection between
9 animal cruelty and violence against humans, domes-

1 tic violence, child abuse, sexual abuse, homicide,
2 gang activity, drug trafficking, and other crimes.

3 (2) Animal fighting activity may increase the
4 spread of diseases transmitted between animals and
5 people.

6 (3) A number of Federal laws have been en-
7 acted to address cruelty to animals.

8 (4) Recognizing the connection between animal
9 cruelty and serious crimes the Federal Bureau of In-
10 vestigation tracks animal cruelty crimes.

11 (5) There is bipartisan and widespread public
12 support for addressing animal cruelty.

13 (6) There is a government interest in ensuring
14 laws are robustly enforced for the betterment and
15 protection of society.

16 (7) The lack of a dedicated animal crimes en-
17 forcement unit within the Department of Justice has
18 resulted in unacceptable delays in prosecutions, and
19 an overall lack of prosecution, of animal crimes.

20 (8) Dedicated staff and resources at the De-
21 partment of Justice will facilitate successful enforce-
22 ment of animal cruelty laws, which often have
23 unique investigative elements, by providing special-
24 ized knowledge and focus, and streamlining the han-
25 dling of these offenses.

1 **SEC. 3. ANIMAL CRUELTY CRIMES SECTION OF THE DE-**
2 **PARTMENT OF JUSTICE.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established an Ani-
4 mal Cruelty Crimes Section within the Environment and
5 Natural Resources Division of the Department of Justice
6 to enforce Federal laws prohibiting animal cruelty under
7 the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice.

8 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Animal Cruelty
9 Crimes Section is to enforce Federal laws prohibiting ani-
10 mal cruelty under the jurisdiction of the Department of
11 Justice and to vigorously pursue investigations and pros-
12 ecutions under such laws.

13 (c) COORDINATION.—The Animal Cruelty Crimes
14 Section shall coordinate with the Department of Agri-
15 culture, the Office of Inspector General of the Department
16 of Agriculture, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the
17 United States Marshals Service, U.S. Customs and Border
18 Protection, and other agencies, as appropriate.

19 (d) REPORT.—On the date that is 1 year after the
20 date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter,
21 the Animal Cruelty Crimes Section shall submit to Con-
22 gress a report on, for the previous year—

23 (1) the number of charges that were filed for
24 violations of laws described in subsection (b),
25 disaggregated by the law alleged to have been vio-

1 lated, the State in which the violation was alleged to
2 have occurred, and the number of convictions; and
3 (2) the number of investigations of violations of
4 laws described in subsection (b) for which charges
5 were not filed.

○