



Animals and the Law

Animal Welfare Legislation When Trooper was taken in by The Donkey Sanctuary of Canada, his condition was very serious and it had been caused by severe and ongoing neglect by the person who had owned him. Better animal cruelty legislation could help to prevent such cruel and careless treatment. The Crimes Against Animals Section of the Criminal Code of Canada was brought into law in 1892. During the one hundred and seventeen years between then and now, few Amendments have been made to the Section. It is outmoded and it reflects values and assumptions that are no longer in keeping with 21st Century awareness of the sentience of animals. Furthermore, as the Section stands, it is full of loopholes that prevent heinous cases of animal abuse from being prosecuted.

Canadian animal welfare organizations, on behalf of the country's citizens, have been calling on the federal government to amend animal cruelty sections of the Criminal Code of Canada for more than 25 years. Bill after bill has been introduced in Parliament, but the Section remains unchanged, save for a limited modification in 2008 to the penalties for animal cruelty. In spite of this lack of substantive action on the part of Parliament, 76% of Canadians continue to support changing the law so that animal cruelty crimes are no longer treated as property crimes. It is important that animals be protected because they can suffer and not just because someone owns them. Increasing the penalties was not enough; parliamentarians must finish the job of bringing animal cruelty laws out of the 19th Century.

Parliament will not address the inadequacies of the federal animal cruelty law unless we demand it. Please speak up by writing to the Justice Minister today. Visit the <http://stopanimalabuse.ca/> campaign website that is sponsored by the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. There, you can send an automatic form letter to the Justice Minister and to other parliamentarians and to order a "Stop Animal Abuse" decal to display on your window.

While you're at it, write to your MP as well by going to <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Default.aspx?Language+E> or call 1-800-622-6232 to find his or her contact information. Remember, letters to an MP go postage-free.

During elections, ask the candidates about where they stand on animal welfare topics such as anti-cruelty legislation and penalties for offenders. If we speak, they will listen.