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Posted February 15, 2011, 5:53 pm MT

Get along little doggie: Fur flies over lawmaker's animal-welfare bill

By Lynn Bartels
Denver Post Staff Writer



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Topics

animal cruelty, Colorado Federation of Animal Welfare Agencies, House Bill 1063, James Mejia, Wes McKinley
A rural lawmaker has invited Coloradans who think they were unfairly treated by animal-welfare officials to tell their stories Wednesday at the state Capitol.



Be nice to us. (Lynn Bartels/The Denver Post)

Rep. Wes McKinley, D-Walsh, said he knows a woman who was cited for animal cruelty because a horse had mud on its feet.

"One person got cited because they said her cow was 50 pounds underweight," he said.

McKinley, who is sponsoring a bill that has riled animal-welfare activists and others, said the owners tomorrow will tell their stories at what he called a "listening committee." It's not an official committee, just a place for people to be heard.

The official committee hearing is Monday when House Ag hears McKinley's measure. House Bill 1063 makes several changes to the requirements and procedures for animal control officers, changes that have some opponents up in arms.

Even Denver mayoral candidate James Mejia even came out swinging today, asking the Denver delegation and others to oppose the measure.

He said McKinley's bill would strip the ability of non-governmental agencies to investigate claims of animal cruelty and shifts responsibility solely on city police, sheriff and animal control agencies. Additionally, non-profits who provide care for injured animals will not be able to recover costs and may have to return animals to abusive owners unless the owner is actually convicted of animal cruelty.

The Colorado Federation of Animal Welfare Agencies opposes the bill.

McKinley been slammed with e-mails from those who despise his bill, but he said there's another side to the story. "I personally know a guy who had cattle that were in bad shape. They were old and it was the end of a tough winter," McKinley said. He said animal-welfare authorities seized 450 of the cattle and sold them, but won't give the owner the proceeds to help pay to feed his remaining cattle. "Do they have a right to take all the animals because one is in distress?" McKinley said. "I think 'no.'"

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MountainMama

The reality is that Rep McKinley is going after the law with a sledgehammer rather than a scalpel. There may be some fine tuning needed, but from some boots-on-the-ground experience with this law I can assure you that the few unfair incidences are far outweighed by the horror stories. For example I would be willing to bet money I can't afford to loose that if you saw both sides of the muddy footed horse story, it would sound a lot different. So rather than emailing Rep McKinley who has already made up his mind, please send an email to your own Representative urging them to vote against this bill.

Amy

McKinley has created a bill out of one personal bad experience he had. It is tough when idealism has to get in the way due to one experience, when clearly there are so many valid animal cruelty cases that occur that get overlooked, or have occurred and have been properly addressed, the cattle thing sounds shady, but then amend the law to combat that case; don't get rid of it all together.

Middle of the Road

Colorado's Department of Agriculture also opposes this bill. McKinley ran this up the flagpole last year and it was defeated last year for one simple reason—it's a very bad bill. It hamstring already financially strapped City and County Animal Control officers by overburdening their case loads. Larimer County Animal Control's budget is virtually non-existent. It was one of the first agencies to take the biggest hit during the recession. They cannot handle the amount of neglect and abuse claims now. How in God's name will they be able to pick up the slack if this passes?

Simple answer—they won't. And the Colorado community will see an uptick in abuse, neglect and death of domestic animals and livestock as a direct result.

aloshka

American's don't feel bad for anything. They slaughter cows by the millions and grow them for 5-10 years in a 5x2ft pen. Cows can't lay down, can't do anything. Likewise American's only care about the comfort of their own asses, and ignore all other people/animals and anything in between. It's all about keeping the American comfortable.

Guest

What does Walter Bond have to do with State-licensed animal cruelty investigators? How will stripping non-governmental agencies of their commissions prevent people like him from doing what he did?

They have nothing to do with each other, and don't confuse animal rights with animal welfare.

Guest

What does Walter Bond have to do with State-licensed animal cruelty investigators? How will stripping non-governmental agencies of their commissions prevent people like him from doing what he did?

They have nothing to do with each other, and don't confuse animal rights with animal welfare.

Banjo

As they should. You're too stupid to know it, but people have a greater chance of doing something about it than a dog.

Banjo

As they should. You're too stupid to know it, but people have a greater chance of doing something about it than a dog.

Amy

it's no wonder many people are so desensitized to animal cruelty issues. http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/efoia/downloads/2009_Animals_Used_In_Research.pdf with a total of 67,337 dogs and 70,044 primates being used in animal research and millions of animals housed in factory farms for our own personal consumption, it's not surprising animal welfare issues frequently get overlooked. I would encourage others to view undercover footage of factory farms, fur farms, research labs, etc. to get a look for themselves — that is what I did. rather than just call a concerned citizen an animal rights activist, thereby allowing their valid concerns to be marginalized in a polarizing category. if i did this to a monkey in my back yard, i would be arrested for cruelty, but when done to thousands, it is called science.

http://www.covancecruelty.com/

http://www.mercyforanimals.org/investigations.aspx

please watch these videos first before bashing people who care about animals.

http://ESRR.org Springer

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated"

Mahatma Gandhi

In this case it is the greatness of the state of Colorado.

OPPOSE – HB11 1063 (McKinley/none)

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