



Better Collaboration, Accountability, and Regulatory Enforcement (CARE) for Animals Act (H.R.3112/S.1538)

Introduced by Sens. John Kennedy (R-LA) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Reps. Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY), Michael Quigley (D-IL), Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA), and Sharice Davids (D-KS)

More AWA enforcement tools are needed to deter violators and limit animal suffering – Animals need Congress' help!

The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) requires research facilities, exhibitors, and breeders/dealers to meet basic standards of animal care. This law is crucial to protecting over a million animals from inhumane treatment, yet many facilities continue to violate it. Without strong enforcement, facilities such as puppy mills and roadside zoos have no meaningful deterrent to violating the law.

This bill would address the current gap in AWA enforcement by allowing the USDA and DOJ to collaborate more effectively on federal cases and allow DOJ to seek license revocations, civil penalties, and forfeiture to remove animals in harmful conditions. Until this bill passes, many violators could escape enforcement, and animals may suffer.

Bringing AWA cases in federal court when animals are seriously impacted

When DOJ assists the USDA with civil enforcement, it sends a strong message to the regulated community. In 2020, the Trump administration used this power for the first time in a case against a big cat exhibitor, Jeffrey Lowe, and Tiger King LLC, for chronic violations. The government seized 68 big cats, including lions and tigers, under the ESA forfeiture provision, which helped deter bad actors.

In May 2022, the DOJ sued Envigo, a Cumberland, Virginia breeding facility, for shocking AWA violations. Government inspectors detailed serious animal welfare issues including beagles that were killed instead of treated, nursing mothers that were denied food, and 25 puppies that died from cold exposure. The DOJ sought action through an injunction against Envigo, and a federal court enjoined Envigo from conducting activity at the Cumberland facility. Envigo entered into a **settlement agreement** leading to the transfer of roughly 4,000 beagles to animal adoption organizations.

This bill sets up a process for the USDA to provide the DOJ with information on AWA violators with multiple citations where animals are seriously impacted.

The Better CARE for Animals Act would give the federal government more tools to strengthen AWA enforcement:

- **Provides the DOJ with information on AWA violators:** In the past three budget bills, Congress has called for closer collaboration and improved coordination between the USDA and DOJ on AWA cases in order to strengthen enforcement. Authorizing language is necessary to maintain the memorandum of understanding, established due to the appropriations language, between the USDA and DOJ, which enables collaboration and ensures the DOJ has access to evidence needed to initiate cases **involving violators who have multiple citations that seriously affect the well-being of animals.**
- **Provides the DOJ with more enforcement remedies under the AWA:** While the DOJ may currently ask courts in AWA cases to issue injunctions to prevent continued unlawful mistreatment of animals, this bill would authorize the DOJ to seek license revocations, civil penalties, and the use of forfeiture to seize and remove animals experiencing harmful treatment.

Without these tools, the government has limited ways to enforce the AWA. Violators will continue to operate, and animals will suffer.

This legislation is endorsed by the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, National Animal Care and Control Association, and over **115** shelters/rescues, sanctuaries, and animal protection groups from across the country.

For additional questions, please contact acollinsmandeville@humaneaction.org.



**Humane World
Action Fund**

Formerly called Humane
Society Legislative Fund