



HELPING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS AND THEIR ANIMALS

Senate Bill (SB) 187

Sponsor: Senator Nancy Rodriguez



THE PROBLEM:

- 🐾 Studies show **up to 65% of domestic violence victims delay leaving abusive relationships or don't report their situations due to concern for their animals' welfare.** Most victims believe there is nowhere to go with their animals.
 - **Batterers frequently use animal cruelty to demonstrate power and control over family members...**
 - > To force submission and to remain silent about abuse
 - > To coerce children into sexual abuse
 - > To prevent the victim from leaving, or
 - > To pressure the victim to return
 - In 2011, there were **21,368 victims of domestic violence incidents reported** to New Mexico law enforcement agencies, but domestic violence remains one of the most underreported crimes.
 - Among the victims of domestic violence who have companion animals and reported to shelters, **over 71 percent report that their abusers threatened, injured or killed the family pet(s).**
 - However, **most New Mexico domestic violence shelters cannot accommodate animals.** A recent survey showed that seven (7) of 31 shelters can accommodate just a few companion animals.
 - **The correlation among animal abuse, family violence and other forms of community violence is well established.**

THE SOLUTION:

- 👂 **SB187: An Appropriation of \$100,000 to the Children, Youth & Families Department (CYFD) for FY2015 programs working with domestic violence and animal protection organizations to provide temporary, confidential care and housing for the animals of domestic violence victims:**
 - In collaboration with the New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence, expanding the capacity of Animal Protection of New Mexico's Companion Animal Rescue Effort (CARE) Network, **furthering partnerships** between government and private agencies, veterinary clinics, boarding kennels, other businesses and individuals to increase help for families in need and increase public awareness about CARE.
 - **Covering basic minimal costs** of transporting animals to CARE Network providers, feed, boarding, veterinary and other care to help keep animals safe until reunited with their family.
 - **Empowering families** to ask for help and leave a violent home as early as possible. Knowing their animals are safe, victims can get the critical support services they need to create a new life for the whole family.
 - **Animals are important sources of comfort and support** especially during a crisis such as leaving home.
 - **CARE serves families statewide** and works with state and local agencies, coalitions, organizations, volunteers and professionals to help break the cycle of violence in New Mexico homes and communities.

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