

MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members

FROM: Representative Mary Isaacson

DATE: May 20, 2019

SUBJECT: The Animal Welfare Cooperation Act

Pennsylvania recently took enormous strides in cracking down on animal cruelty in passing Libre's law, finally creating felony level penalties for egregious acts of animal cruelty.

Recently, the FBI has started tracking animal cruelty crimes as a risk factor for future violence against humans, and many studies have shown the link between animal cruelty and domestic violence. Pennsylvania taking animal cruelty seriously is an important first step in protecting our most vulnerable citizens, however, we must make sure to do all we can to ensure its enforcement.

In his Budget hearing last month, the Attorney General stated that he would welcome concurrent jurisdiction on animal cruelty. This would permit the assistance of the Attorney General in prosecuting large scale animal cruelty cases in counties which have had little experience in doing so. The Attorney General's office would be able to both prosecute cases and train assistant district attorneys and humane police officers. Currently, the Attorney General is only able to step in on cases as referred by the District Attorney due to conflicts.

I am grateful for the willingness of our Attorney General to tackle this important issue and assist our counties in becoming a model state in eradicating animal cruelty. Please join me in cosponsoring this important legislation.