

# News...

*from the Illinois House of Representatives*

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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**Kifowit-Backed Measure Protecting Children From Exposure to Abuse Passes General Assembly**

AURORA, Ill. – In an effort to protect animals and children, legislation sponsored by state Rep. Stephanie Kifowit, D-Oswego, increasing penalties on adults who abuse animals in front of children passed the General Assembly on May 31.

“Children who witness adults abusing animals can be permanently affected by it,” Kifowit said. When violent acts in front of children become routine, the children can be influenced to believe it is acceptable behavior. Imprinting this in young minds can lead to further behavioral and psychological issues in the future.

Those convicted under current law of abusing an animal face a misdemeanor charge for their first offense and the lowest level felony charge for the second offense. Kifowit co-sponsored House Bill 3231 to strengthen animal abuse laws by adding an additional 100 hours of community service and a fine of \$250 if the abuse occurs in the presence of a minor under the age of 18.

Illinois has been recognized by animal rights groups for having one of the strictest animal abuse laws in the country. The 2014 Animal League Defense Fund ranked Illinois first in the nation for animal protection laws. The Animal Welfare Institute, Animal Legal Defense Fund, and Best Friends Animal Society all supported House Bill 3231.

“When abusers involve children in their cruelty to animals, they are committing two crimes: animal abuse and child abuse, and thus deserve to face additional penalties,” said Nancy Blaney, senior policy advisor with the Animal Welfare Institute. “It is well documented that trauma has long-term negative effects on children, and witnessing animal abuse is a traumatic experience. We are grateful to the Illinois legislature for recognizing this by unanimously adopting HB 3231.”

For more information, please contact Kifowit's constituent's service office at [630-585-1308](tel:630-585-1308), email [Stephanie.Kifowit@att.net](mailto:Stephanie.Kifowit@att.net), or visit [www.ILDistrict84.com](http://www.ILDistrict84.com).

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