

THE FACTS ABOUT:

# Enforcement of Animal Abuser Registries



**Point-of-sale verifications to enforce animal abuser registries put pet store workers and shelter volunteers in harm's way.**

## THE ISSUE

The United States is a compassionate society that condemns animal abuse. Knowing that animal abuse often accompanies, or is a precursor to domestic violence, it is even more important to stop people who hurt defenseless animals.<sup>1</sup>

Animal abuser registries help law enforcement and the pet care community identify and keep these convicted felons from harming animals again. But often overlooked are the risks and dangers that come along with requiring point-of-sale verifications as the registry's enforcement mechanism.

An animal abuser registry with point-of-sale verification requires retail pet store employees and animal shelter volunteers to check if customers are listed as animal abusers before processing a pet adoption. If the customer is on the registry, the store or shelter is responsible for turning away these individuals—or they could face fines or legal prosecution.

## WHY ARE POINT-OF-SALE VERIFICATIONS A BAD IDEA?

Point-of-sale verifications put hardworking and innocent employees in the line of fire of a proven criminal who could cause severe harm to them or others if provoked.

## THE CASE FOR ELIMINATING POINT-OF-SALE VERIFICATION:

Animal abusers are **5x** as likely to harm a person<sup>2</sup>

---

Reoffending rates of animal abusers is almost **100%**<sup>2</sup>

---

**60%** of child abuse cases also had animals in the home that had been abused<sup>3</sup>

---

Animal abuse is often the **first** point of intervention for domestic violence<sup>4</sup>

---

More than **50%** of the battered women report their abuser abused their animal companions<sup>4</sup>

## THE FACTS ABOUT:

# Enforcement of Animal Abuser Registries

Animal abusers are five times as likely to harm humans,<sup>2</sup> are often associated with child abuse and domestic violence,<sup>3,4</sup> and are nearly 100 percent likely to display abusive behavior towards animals again.<sup>5</sup>

To keep employees and volunteers out of danger, it should not be their responsibility to enforce the registry and have to turn away a felon convicted of animal cruelty that is attempting to obtain a pet store or shelter pet.

### HOW SHOULD ANIMAL ABUSER REGISTRIES BE ENFORCED?

Law enforcement professionals should always be responsible for enforcing animal abuser registries because they are trained to handle volatile personalities and dangerous situations—store employees and shelter volunteers are not.

States should be required to regularly follow up with the abusers on the registry, which provides law enforcement the opportunity to expertly identify and appropriately punish cases of abuse.

The state could also frequently distribute the names and pictures of registry offenders to stores and shelters to share with employees and volunteers, who would be instructed to contact authorities if they saw someone on the list obtaining a pet. With this, the pet provider supports law enforcement as an informant, without risk to their physical safety.

Another viable option is to establish a federal abuser database. The FBI already tracks the statistics, the federal government has the resources to establish and maintain it, and convicts could not move out of the jurisdiction to avoid being listed.



**In order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pet store employees and shelter volunteers who could be put in harm's way by confronting felons with a history of violence, it is critical that point-of-sale verification NOT be included in animal abuser registry legislation. Leave the enforcement of animal abuser registries to trained law enforcement professionals.**

<sup>1</sup> Arkow, P., 2003, *Breaking the Cycles of Violence: A Guide to Multidisciplinary Interventions*. Latham Foundation.

<sup>2,5</sup> Arluke, Arnold & Levin, Jack & LUKE, CARTER & Ascione, Frank. (1999). The Relationship of Animal Abuse to Violence and Other Forms of Antisocial Behavior. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence-J INTERPERS VIOLENCE*. 14. 963-975. 10.1177/088626099014009004.

<sup>3</sup> DeViney, E., Dickert, J., & Lockwood, R. (1983). The care of pets within child abusing families. *International Journal for the Study of Animal Problems*, 4(4), 321-329.

<sup>4</sup> David Crary, "Program Links Domestic Abuse, Pets," Associated Press, 11 Mar. 2001.