

## TALKING POINTS:

# Enforcement of Animal Abuser Registries

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### THE TRUTH ABOUT ANIMAL ABUSER REGISTRIES:

- An animal abuser registry is a public list, maintained by federal, local or state governments, of criminals who have been tried and convicted of cruelty to animals.
- Animal abuser registries help law enforcement and the pet care community identify and keep convicted felons from harming animals again.
- Often overlooked are the risks and dangers that come along with requiring point-of-sale verifications as the registry's enforcement mechanism.

### THE TRUTH ABOUT POINT-OF-SALE VERIFICATIONS:

- Enforcement of an animal abuser registry with point-of-sale verification requires retail pet store and shelter employees to verify if customers are listed as animal abusers before processing a pet sale. If the customer is listed, the store or shelter would be responsible for enforcing the registry and refusing to provide the pet.
- Point-of-sale verifications put hardworking and innocent employees in the line of fire of a convicted criminal who could cause severe harm to them or others if provoked.
- Scientific data on the relationship of animal abuse to violence and antisocial behavior shows that animal abusers are five times as likely to harm humans and nearly 100 percent likely to display abusive behavior towards animals again.<sup>1</sup> Animal abuse is also associated with child abuse<sup>2</sup> and domestic violence.<sup>3</sup>

### HOW ANIMAL ABUSER REGISTRIES SHOULD BE ENFORCED:

- Law enforcement professionals should 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.
- Better ways to enforce animal abuser registries include:
  - Requiring states to regularly follow up in person with the abusers on the list; or
  - Providing the names and photos of offenders to stores and shelters with instructions to contact authorities if someone listed tried to obtain a pet, or
  - Establishing a federal database, using data currently tracked by the FBI, which would prevent offenders from relocating to another state to avoid being listed.

### CALL-TO-ACTION:

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, point-of-sale verification should NOT be included in animal abuser registry legislation. Leave the enforcement of animal abuser registries to trained law enforcement professionals.

<sup>1</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>2</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>3</sup> David Crary, "Program Links Domestic Abuse, Pets," Associated Press, 11 Mar. 2001.