

## FIRST STRIKE AND YOU'RE OUT

### A Proposal for Mandatory Bans on Contact with Animals Following a Conviction for Animal Neglect or Cruelty

Currently, most states have no mandatory requirements keeping those who are convicted of animal abuse crimes away from animals following their convictions.<sup>1</sup> This despite the fact that offenders have demonstrated, through their actions, their utter disregard for the welfare of animals, and that recidivism in some types of animal abuse cases can reach 100%.<sup>2</sup>

Yet having an animal in one's life is a privilege, not a right – and with that privilege comes certain responsibilities, including the responsibility of providing adequate care and otherwise not abusing or neglecting the animal. Our FIRST STRIKE AND YOU'RE OUT law provides another tool to help combat animal neglect and cruelty by mandating that those who are convicted of a violation of their state animal protection laws are prohibited from owning or having contact with animals for a set period of time, ranging from five years for a first misdemeanor offense up to the lifetime of the offender following a second felony offense.

Enacting a FIRST STRIKE AND YOU'RE OUT law in your state will help in the fight against animal neglect and cruelty by keeping offenders away from potential new animal victims, which would, for example, help stem the high rate of recidivism often associated with animal hoarding. This proposal will also help reduce the huge economic toll which repeat offenders impose on their communities – hoarding cases in particular are very costly, often requiring the cooperation of several local agencies.

Please contact your state legislators today and ask them to support a FIRST STRIKE AND YOU'RE OUT law for those who are convicted of animal neglect or cruelty.

#### FIRST STRIKE AND YOU'RE OUT Law Highlights:

- ✓ Separates offenders from potential new victims
- ✓ Will help to reduce future crimes against animals and save limited community resources
- ✓ Those who have been convicted of animal neglect or cruelty have demonstrated, through their actions, their irresponsibility with animals. This justifies having a set period of time where they are not allowed contact with them.
- ✓ Addresses high recidivism rates (near 100%) for certain offenders (i.e. animal hoarders)

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<sup>1</sup> The following states have at least some form of mandatory restrictions on select types of contact with animals following certain convictions: California, Delaware, Kansas, Louisiana Nebraska, Oregon, Washington, West Virginia. Nonetheless, even these existing laws have significant room for additional strengthening.

<sup>2</sup> Animal Hoarding: Structuring Interdisciplinary Responses to Help People, Animals, and Communities at Risk, Gary J. Patronek, Lynn Loar, and Jane N. Nathanson, 2006.

