

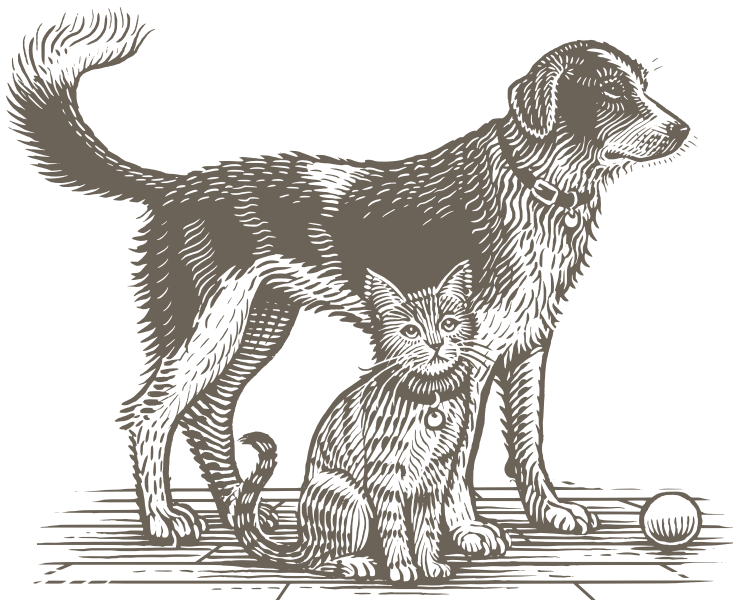


The Animals' Advocate

FEATURE

RANKING EVERY STATE'S ANIMAL LAWS

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Leo is a survivor of animal cruelty and the 2023 animal representative for the Animal Legal Defense Fund's National Justice for Animals Week. Read more about him on page 8.

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ANIMAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND EST 1979

Whether this is the first edition of *The Animals' Advocate* you've read or you're a longtime reader, I want to thank you for your support of the Animal Legal Defense Fund's important work.

I remember the first edition I read. I'd recently graduated from college and was figuring out what to do with my degree. I had no idea there were attorneys who worked on behalf of animals, but that sounded perfect for me. When I started law school, I co-founded the Animal Legal Defense Fund Columbia Law Student Chapter and enrolled in an animal law seminar. It's been quite the journey to get here, but I am so proud to be part of this impactful, ambitious organization.

Although I have served as chief programs officer of the Animal Legal Defense Fund for multiple years, I know I'm new to many of you. It's a new year and a new era for the organization and I am excited about everything we are going to achieve together. Although change brings its challenges, change for the better is part of our mission. It's progress, after all, and that's always worth the work.

Thank you for being part of that progress for the Animal Legal Defense Fund and, most importantly, the animals.



For the animals,

Kera Melrose

Kera Melrose
Interim Executive Director



Where Does Your State Rank?

The Animal Legal Defense Fund releases the latest U.S. State Animal Protection Laws Ranking Report.

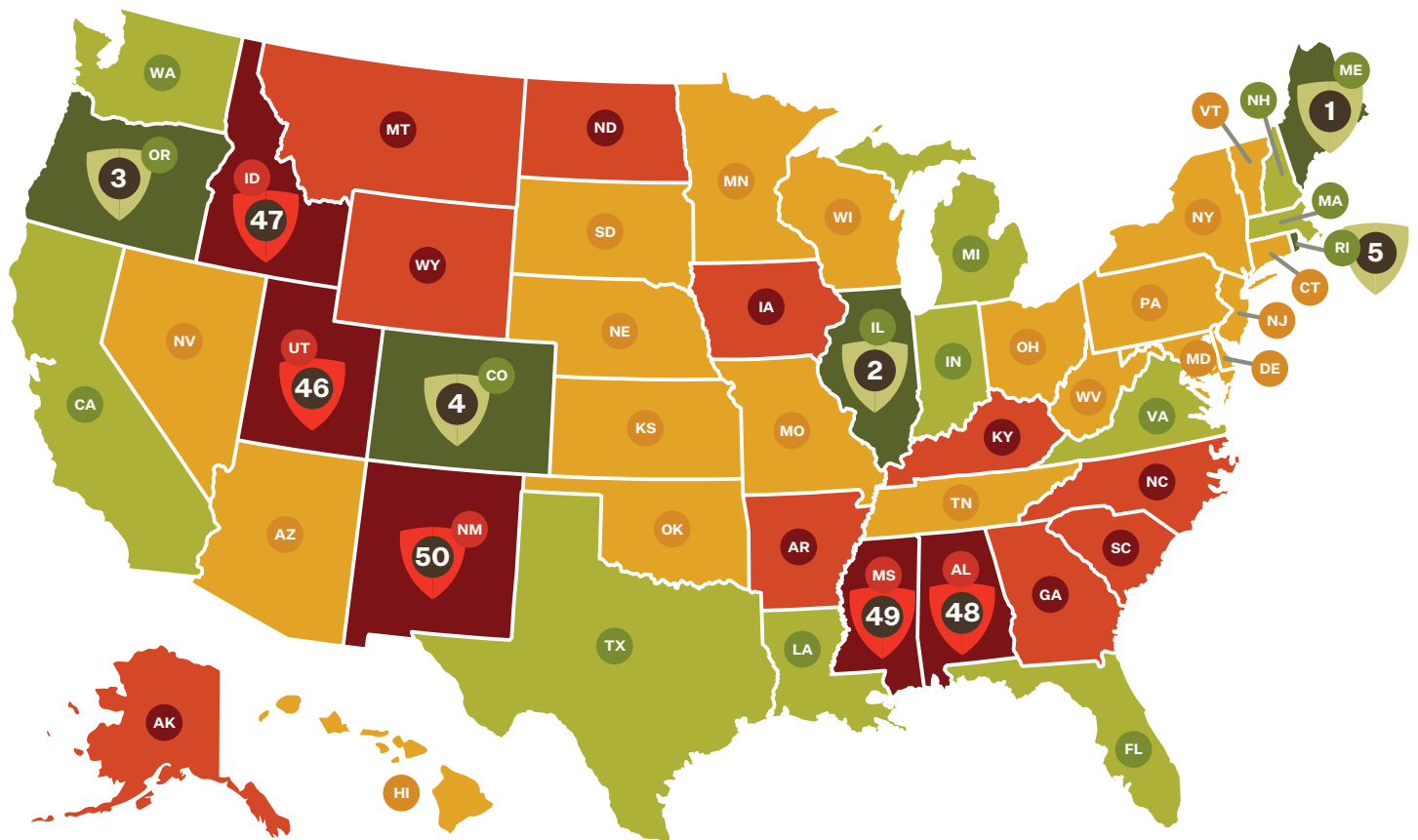
For the 17th straight year, the Animal Legal Defense Fund has released our definitive ranking of U.S. states and territories on the strength of their laws protecting animals.

Over the years, these rankings have inspired lawmakers to take action to improve their animal protection laws. (For example, they previously inspired the complete overhaul of outdated animal protection laws in Guam, now the top-ranking U.S. territory on the list.)

The report doesn't end with rankings — it also notes opportunities for improvement in each state, from the lowest-ranked to the highest. *Every* state can do better for animals — and with the dedication of advocates like you, they will!

Find out which strengths and weaknesses contributed to your state's rank, and find recommendations you can take directly to state lawmakers, at aldf.org/staterankings.

RANKINGS BEST TO WORST:



TOP-RANKED STATES

- 1 MAINE
- 2 ILLINOIS
- 3 OREGON
- 4 COLORADO
- 5 RHODE ISLAND

LOWEST-RANKED STATES

- 46 UTAH
- 47 IDAHO
- 48 ALABAMA
- 49 MISSISSIPPI
- 50 NEW MEXICO

MOST IMPROVED:

MARYLAND

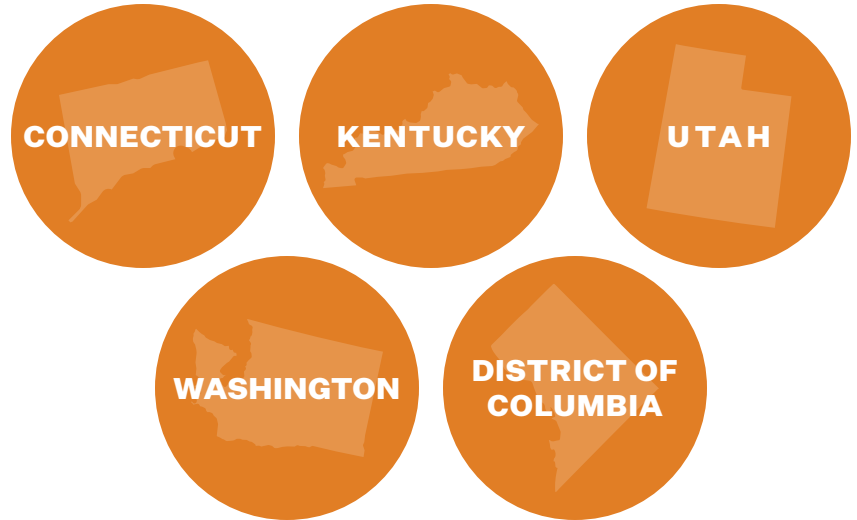
(Learn about the state's new cat declawing ban on page 5.)



NATIONWIDE TRENDS:

Laws enabling animals to be included in protective orders.

All too often, domestic abusers threaten or harm a victim's animal in order to torment or control the victim. Fortunately, lawmakers are increasingly taking action by passing state laws specifically allowing courts to include animals in protective orders — commonly known as restraining orders. In 2022, four states and the District of Columbia created new laws or strengthened existing ones involving the coverage of animals in protective orders.



Today, 38 states and three territories have such laws on the books, though continued improvement is needed.

50% The approximate percentage of women in domestic violence shelters who say they delayed their escape from their abuser out of concern for their animal's safety.

Laws banning the sexual assault of animals. Astonishingly, not every state has yet expressly banned this deplorable crime — but in 2022, three states enacted new legislation.





STANDING UP FOR VULNERABLE PUPPIES AND KITTENS

All too often in our work, we see the many ways that animal exploiters use puppies for profit.

Knowing the deep bond that exists between dogs and people, they pull at customers' heartstrings — and frequently subject them to fraud.



With your help, we're combating animal scams from multiple angles, filing lawsuits, lobbying for much-needed legislation, and educating the public.

As more consumers have become aware of puppy mill cruelty, and numerous cities and states have banned the retail sale of

dogs and cats, online sales are a last bastion for many scammers.

Frequently, the animals advertised online don't even exist. But when they do, they often arrive with life-threatening and contagious illnesses, such as parvovirus or distemper.

Right now, your support is powering multiple lawsuits taking on puppy exploiters. These include a lawsuit against a family of puppy traffickers who knowingly sold ailing animals, some of whom later died — as well as a class-action lawsuit challenging a scheme in which puppies bred in Midwest puppy mills were unlawfully “laundered” into California and sold as rescue dogs.

Learn more about our work to combat puppy mills at aldf.org/pupppymills.



Proven Track Record: The Animal Legal Defense Fund helped enact two important bills protecting cats from declawing in 2022. Maryland became the second U.S. state to ban the procedure, while in Delaware, our advocacy led to a new law prohibiting landlords from requiring that a tenant's cat be declawed as a condition for renting.

Up to 199%: The interest rates commonly charged — hidden in the fine print, of course — in exploitative financing agreements often used in online puppy sales. The Animal Legal Defense Fund is fighting this practice through legislation.

Victory for Puppies in New York

In December, New York’s Puppy Mill Pipeline Bill was signed into law, making the state the latest to ban the retail sale of mill-bred puppies, kittens, and rabbits in pet stores. We’ve worked for years to secure the law’s passage, including by driving thousands of calls and emails to state lawmakers at a critical moment last year.

Protecting Cats — and Their Claws

Thanks to you, we’re hard at work in multiple states advocating for cat declawing bans. Declawing is a painful, traumatic surgical procedure that affects cats for life. Declawing bans not only protect cats, but also drive public understanding that declawing is an amputation, not a manicure. Bans make exceptions for situations in which declawing is medically necessary for the cat, such as in the treatment of cancer of the nail bed. Learn more at aldf.org/protectpaws.



New Video Exposes the Truth About Online Animal Sales

Narrated by actress and animal advocate Rooney Mara, *Don’t Buy Animals Online* illustrates the rampant fraud involved in online sales of puppies and other animals. Learn more at aldf.org/protectpuppies.



Scan with your smartphone's camera to watch



Proven Track Record: With your help, we sponsored a California bill — signed into law in 2022 — that protects both puppies and consumers by banning predatory lending schemes that trap online puppy purchasers and prop up cruel puppy mills.



NEW PILOT PROGRAM TACKLES CRUELTY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

To fight abuse and neglect, animals need a team of trained advocates on their side.

They need law enforcement officers to investigate cruelty, and devoted animal sheltering professionals to care for animal victims.

They need veterinarians to document the effects of abuse and neglect and help cruelty survivors recover and begin new lives.

They need prosecutors who can effectively bring the case against cruelty, and judges with a thorough understanding of these cases.



Managing Attorney Emily Lewis in McHenry County, Illinois.

And all of these experts need training, resources, and effective partnerships.

Now, with your help, we've created a new pilot program to help local authorities and experts combat cruelty where they live. The year-long program recently launched in McHenry County, Illinois, with plans for expansion.

Cruelty fighters on the ground will receive:

- tools for building a local network to respond when animals are abused or neglected;
- funding for veterinary services in cruelty cases, including veterinary forensics;
- hands-on training for vets, law enforcement officers, and prosecutors;
- case consultations from our animal-focused criminal justice experts; and
- proven processes and materials to help them fight cruelty far into the future.

We know that animal cruelty exists in every city and town — and positive outcomes for cruelty survivors like Leo (at right) are dependent on the hard work of local animal advocates. Thanks to you, we're working to make sure these advocates have all the tools they need. Learn more at aldf.org/McHenry.

ANIMAL PROFILE

Name: Leo

Responding Agency: Naugatuck Animal Control

Background: Emaciated and starving, Leo was seized by a Connecticut animal control officer who responded to a report of suspected cruelty. The man responsible was charged with cruelty to animals, but he refused to relinquish “ownership” of Leo. Consequently, Leo was held in protective custody at a municipal shelter for more than two years as his case stretched on.



At left, Leo today. At right, during intake.

Status: Adopted! Under Connecticut’s first-in-the-nation Courtroom Animal Advocate Program (CAAP) law, Leo was able to have his interests represented in court by a volunteer legal advocate. As a result, he was released from custody, enabling him to be adopted into a loving home.

How You’re Helping: Thanks to you, the Animal Legal Defense Fund was able to provide grant funding to cover the cost of Leo’s care at the animal shelter, including veterinary exams, lab tests, medications, and more. Meanwhile, you’re powering our support of the pioneering CAAP efforts of the Animal Law Clinic at the University of Connecticut School of Law. A UConn teaching fellow, Tara Cooley, worked with law student Gwendolyn Pastor to advocate for Leo’s release from shelter custody under Connecticut’s CAAP law, paving the way for his happy new life. The Animal Legal Defense Fund is currently hard at work lobbying for similar laws in multiple other states. Learn more and watch the short film *The Case for Courtroom Animal Advocate Programs*, narrated by Academy Award-winning actress Anjelica Huston, at aldf.org/caap.

Leo served as the 2023 spokes-animal for the Animal Legal Defense Fund’s National Justice for Animals Week, an annual observance dedicated to preventing cruelty and honoring people who fight to protect animals from abuse and neglect.



GIFTS BY BENEFICIARY DESIGNATION

Gifts by beneficiary designation are an easy way to leave a legacy for animals in your giving plans. Assets such as life insurance, IRAs, and retirement plans are not directed by the terms of your will. Instead, these assets are distributed by the information provided on a beneficiary designation form. Best of all, you can change your beneficiaries at any time without visiting with your lawyer.

To make a beneficiary designation, contact your insurance company, financial institution, bank, or retirement plan administrator and request a change-of-beneficiary form. Include the percentage of each beneficiary on the form as well as additional necessary information.



Keeping a copy of your designations along with your will or trust is helpful to have all of your documentation in one place.

If you have any questions about making a bequest to the Animal Legal Defense Fund, please email estates@aldf.org or call 707-795-2533 x1034.

Have you already included the Animal Legal Defense Fund in your giving plans? If so, please share your gift details with us at aldf.org/plannedgiving.

To name the Animal Legal Defense Fund as a beneficiary, please use the following information:

Animal Legal Defense Fund
525 East Cotati Ave.
Cotati, CA 94931
Tax ID#: 94-2681680

Justice for Animals — Third Virtual Fundraiser A Big Success!

On January 26, animal advocates from across the country joined us for a virtual event to celebrate milestone legal and legislative progress for animals while raising over \$850,000! With the help of guest co-host Jackson Galaxy (celebrity cat behaviorist of Animal Planet’s *My Cat From Hell* and New York Times best-selling author), we honored animal advocates including actress Kate Mara and Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, while raising vital funds for the Animal Legal Defense Fund’s work. Attendees were treated to special appearances by Dr. Jane Goodall, U.S. Senator Cory Booker, actress Rooney Mara, stand-up comedian Nikki Glaser, and others as well as a heartfelt video presentation from staff to our supporters accompanied by music from FINNEAS. Missed the event, or want to share it with a friend? Watch on demand at aldf.org/JFA.

Special thanks to Justice for Animals Platinum Chairs Ginny Tiu and John & Timi Sobrato, the fantastic Justice for Animals Host Committee, and our sponsors:





VICTORY: LEGAL PETITION BRINGS IMPROVED PROTECTIONS FOR ANIMALS

In order for our government to protect animals, it needs to be armed with information.

But until our recent legal petition, a key federal agency was letting critical details slip through the cracks. As a result, animals entitled to protection under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) were dying in substandard roadside zoos and traveling zoos — with the government none the wiser.

Fortunately, our legal petition, filed with CompassionWorks International, has resulted in a critical improvement that will make a difference for countless animals. In response to the petition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agreed to strengthen its tracking of animal deaths at facilities licensed under the AWA.

When animals at a facility are dying, reasons can include inadequate care, ongoing abuse, improper diet, or even the presence of a contagious disease. Improved reporting requirements mean that the USDA will have the opportunity for early detection and intervention — which in turn can protect more animals and prevent additional deaths.

Learn more at aldf.org/captiveanimals.

Big Win for Big Cats! After a multi-year, multi-pronged advocacy effort from the Animal Legal Defense Fund, the bipartisan Big Cat Public Safety Act has been signed into law. For far too long, animal exploiters took advantage of a patchwork of state laws governing the possession of captive big cats. Now, federal law bans private individuals from acquiring, breeding, or selling big cats, and requires individuals who currently possess them to register them with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service no later than June 18, 2023. The law also ends the cruel “cub petting” industry, in which big cat cubs are indiscriminately bred and taken from their mothers for use in high-priced photo ops. Learn more about the new law at aldf.org/bigcats.



YOU CAN HELP ANIMALS ALL YEAR LONG AS A PARTNER IN PROTECTION!

Animal Legal Defense Fund Partners in Protection are individuals who make automatic, monthly contributions (of any amount!) to help realize one goal: the safety and protection of all animals.

This dedicated group of donors provides the financial foundation we depend on to keep up the fight to protect animals and bring abusers to justice — for as long as it takes to succeed. These Partners in Protection empower the Animal Legal Defense Fund to act swiftly and effectively whenever animals' lives or interests are at risk. With their loyal, steadfast support, we're able to focus our energies and resources solely where they belong: fighting animal cruelty and injustice.

It's a simple, yet powerful way to strengthen your impact in this fight. Because there's still so much work to be done, and we need more Partners standing strong beside us — we're stronger together! **Will you take your commitment to animal protection to the next level by joining 3,000 others as a Partner in Protection with a monthly gift today?**

There are perks, too! To show our appreciation for their generous commitment and trust, Partners in Protection receive:

- Special invitations and discount codes to online webinars and events.
- Quarterly Impact Reports that illustrate how their donations are being used to win the case against cruelty.
- Exclusive print publications such as the Animal Legal Defense Fund's Annual Report.



Ready to become a Partner in Protection, but don't know how? It's easy!

- You can visit us online at aldf.org/pip and complete the online form to start your automatic monthly gifts.
- You can fill out the reply form attached to the enclosed letter or enclose a voided check and return it to us using the pre-paid envelope provided (don't forget to indicate the monthly amount to be charged in the Partners in Protection box!).
- You can call our Membership Services at 707-795-2533 x1011 and someone will assist you with starting your monthly gift over the phone.

Thank you for always standing up for animals and standing with the Animal Legal Defense Fund. We look forward to welcoming you as the newest member of our Partners in Protection and working with you to make our society a better place for animals.



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