

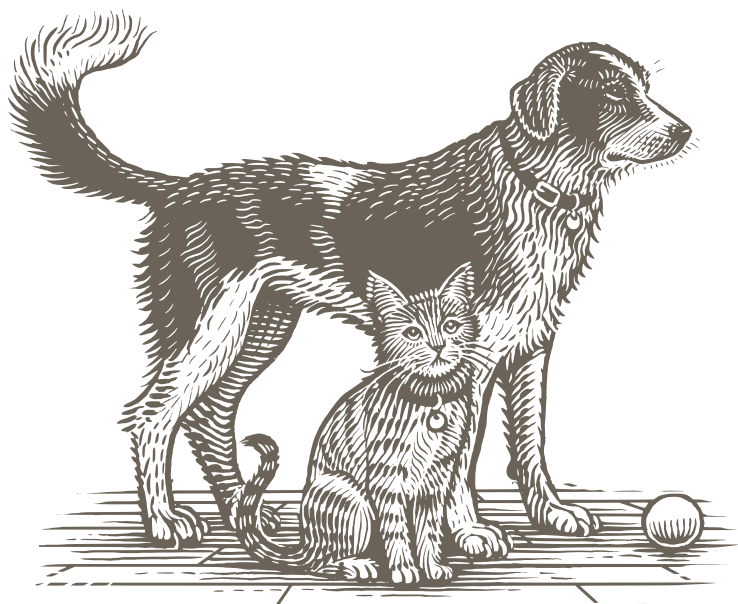


The Animals' Advocate

FEATURE

WHERE DOES YOUR STATE STAND ON ANIMAL CRUELTY?

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Sonnie was born in a puppy mill before being “laundered” through a fake rescue group and unlawfully misrepresented as a “rescue puppy” in a California pet store. Your support is helping the Animal Legal Defense Fund fight on behalf of Sonnie and her guardian in court. Learn more on page 8.

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Dear Fellow Animal Advocate,

I don't just lead the Animal Legal Defense Fund; I also revere it. There's so much to love about this organization, and the work we do together for the animals. Supporters like you are the engine of that work.

One of the things I most appreciate about ALDF is the depth of our work over the span of years and decades. Strategy builds on strategy; precedent builds on precedent.

ALDF stays the course.

Take our U.S. State Animal Protection Laws Ranking Report (see page 3), a resource we've compiled annually for 19 straight years, which in that time has inspired multiple jurisdictions to improve their laws protecting animals.

Or our fight to stop cruel and unnecessary cat declawing, which recently saw a major victory when Massachusetts become the third U.S. state to enact a full ban on the practice (see page 7).

Or our years-long battle to protect dogs from the inhumane puppy mill industry, which has taken many legal and legislative forms, and in February resulted in an important procedural win in our class-action lawsuit against a network of puppy profiteers (see page 8).

I'm honored to stand beside you as part of an organization that has worked tirelessly to advance animals' legal rights for more than four decades and counting. Our victories for the animals continue to build on themselves thanks to your support.



For the animals,

Chris Green
Executive Director

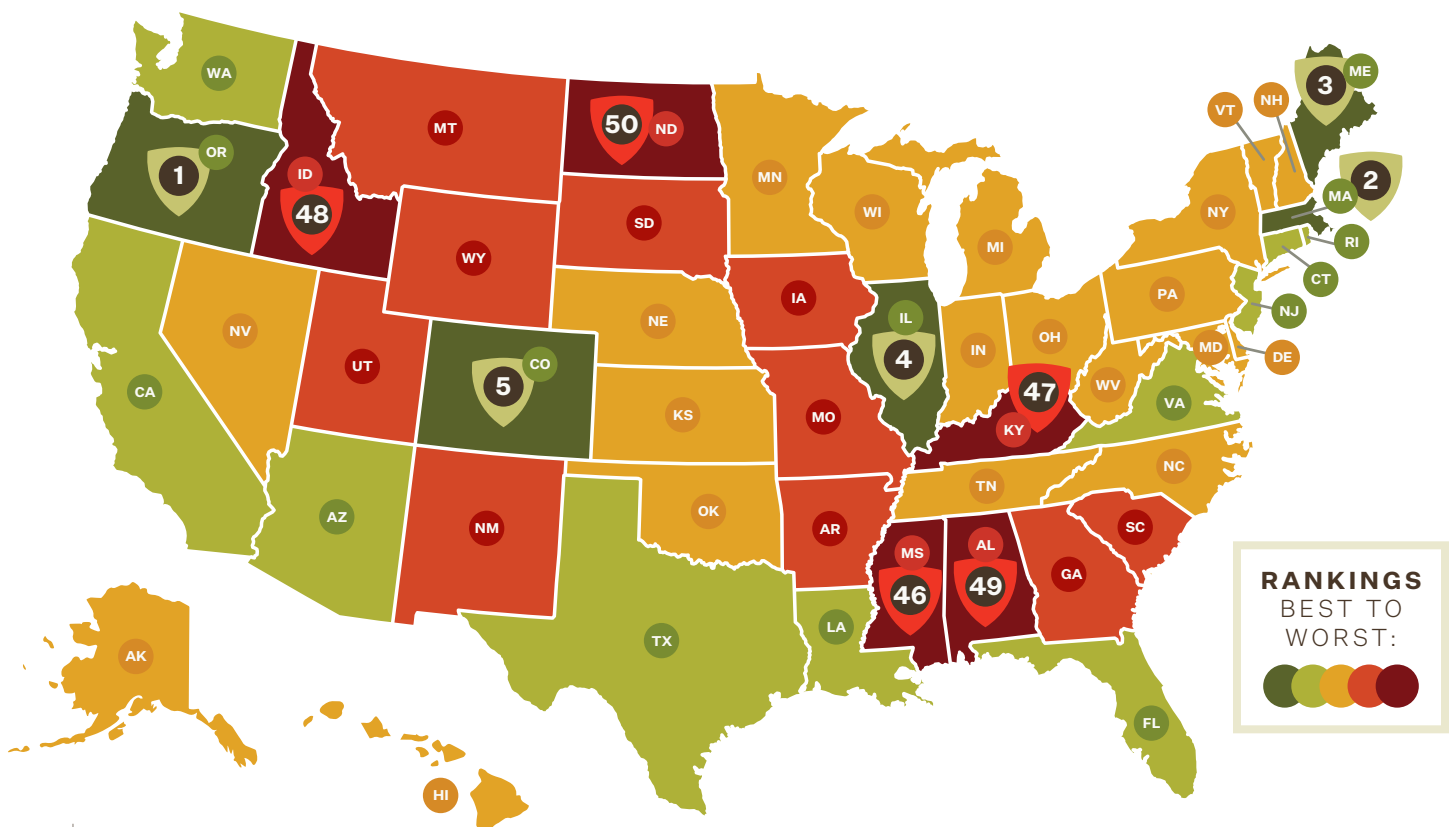


How Safe is Your Jurisdiction for Animals? We Rank Every State and Territory's Cruelty Laws

Our top-ranked U.S. state strengthened its animal protection laws in 2024, including by enacting a new law making it a criminal offense to interfere with an animal cruelty investigation.

Meanwhile, our lowest-ranked state hasn't even updated its animal protection laws in a decade. Its laws are so flawed, in fact, that they almost entirely exempt stray animals, meaning that **even extreme torture of an unowned dog or community cat could go unanswered.**

Now in its 19th year, ALDF's pioneering U.S. State Animal Protection Laws Ranking Report sees our criminal-justice experts poring over thousands of pages of state and territorial laws, meticulously tracking new improvements and ongoing failures to protect animals.





Our latest edition sees last year's #1 and #50 states — Oregon and North Dakota, respectively — holding their positions. It also notes positive trends in animal protection laws nationwide, and provides state-specific action items that lawmakers can take to rise in the ranks and protect more animals. Indeed, numerous states and territories have worked to improve their anti-cruelty laws on the strength of our rankings — relying on ALDF's Model Laws and staff expertise to do so.

Explore the report and find out how your state's laws stack up at aldf.org/staterankings.

TOP FIVE STATES

- 1 OREGON
- 2 MASSACHUSETTS
- 3 MAINE
- 4 ILLINOIS
- 5 COLORADO

Did you know? Oregon is currently the only U.S. state to formally recognize in its statutes that animals are sentient beings capable of experiencing pain, stress, and fear.

BOTTOM FIVE STATES

- 50 NORTH DAKOTA
- 49 ALABAMA
- 48 IDAHO
- 47 KENTUCKY
- 46 MISSISSIPPI

Did you know? Kentucky is the only U.S. state that excludes all cold-blooded animals from its definition of “animal” — leaving countless animals vulnerable to cruelty without legal recourse.

MOST IMPROVED STATE SOUTH CAROLINA

Did you know? South Carolina rose from 47th to 40th place after enacting a “bond-or-forfeit” law. Such laws protect both animal victims and the shelters that care for them during the course of criminal proceedings by requiring animal cruelty defendants to pay for the animal's care rather than forcing the shelter to foot the bill — or alternatively, to surrender the animal so they can be adopted into a loving new home.

TOP U.S. TERRITORY GUAM

Did you know? Guam stands alone among U.S. states and territories in including an animal's emotional and mental distress as part of the definition of “suffering” in its animal cruelty laws. The territory relied heavily on ALDF's Model Laws when it revamped its animal protection laws in 2021.





LEGISLATIVE TREND: PROTECTING HUMAN VICTIMS AND THEIR ANIMALS — TOGETHER

One 2024 legislative trend was the updating of state domestic violence prevention laws to add animal cruelty to the list of offenses that can be considered illegal “coercive control.”

This simple change to a state’s law can make a big difference, both for human victims of domestic violence and their animals. All too often, domestic abusers exploit their victims’ love for their animals — threatening or harming an animal as a means of controlling or terrorizing the person who loves them. And a victim may be more inclined to stay in a dangerous situation if they fear for their companion animal’s safety.

With your help, ALDF was at the forefront of this effort — ensuring that both human victims and their animals can be safe from abuse, and that state laws provide an avenue for protecting them.

In 2024, we were actively involved in passing “coercive control” laws that include animal cruelty and threats to animals in their definitions of domestic abuse in both Massachusetts and Vermont. Currently, 14 U.S. states and the District of Columbia include animal cruelty in their definitions of domestic abuse (see if your state is among them at aldf.org/coercive-control). Your support is enabling us to work across the country to bring this commonsense reform to even more states.

Victory in Pennsylvania: With support from ALDF, Pennsylvania became the latest state to enable companion animals to be included in a human guardian’s protective order against their abuser (also known as a restraining order). See if your state is among the 41 states that now allow animals in protective orders at aldf.org/protection-orders.



ANATOMY OF A CRUELTY CASE

In #8-ranked Washington, a tragic cruelty case led to a landmark outcome — thanks to the state’s newly created special prosecutor, the Animal Crimes Assistant Attorney General (AAG), a position made possible by ALDF’s support.

In this case, AAG Scott Halloran sought justice for wild birds, squirrels, and a kitten shot by the defendant, who gruesomely displayed his victims’ bodies around his property — prompting a state Fish and Wildlife officer to recount it as “the most disturbing and grotesque scene that he had encountered in his entire career.”

Why is this case unique? Crimes against wildlife are rarely prosecuted, but AAG Halloran was undaunted. His pursuit of justice for these animals resulted in **the first-ever felony convictions for wildlife victims in the state.** The defendant is now serving a sentence of more than three years in prison, owes thousands of dollars in restitution, and — critically — has been permanently banned from owning or living with animals. (Strengthening animal possession bans for convicted abusers was a trend noted by our Rankings Report; see where your state stands at aldf.org/pcpb.)

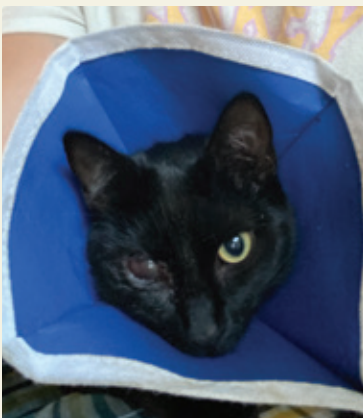
Honoring the victims — and their champion:

The case inspired us to honor three crow victims — Alice, Esme, and Emmett — as this year’s animal representatives for National Justice for Animals Week. This annual event educates the public about crimes against animals and honors those who work tirelessly to combat cruelty. Learn more and meet our Top Animal Defenders for 2025 (including AAG Halloran) at aldf.org/njfaw.



Did you know? Crows like Alice, Esme, and Emmett are highly intelligent and creative — famed for their tool use and apparent sense of fun. See a video of crows turning a parked car’s snowy windshield into a makeshift sledding hill at aldf.org/crow-snow.

ANIMAL PROFILE:



Name: Hades

Case: *State v. Perez*

Background: Just 8 months old when the defendant senselessly shot him, Hades lost an eye and suffered a fractured jaw, leaving him

traumatized and his guardians facing thousands of dollars in unexpected veterinary bills.

Status: Praised by his family for “staying loving and resilient despite all he’s been through,” Hades has made impressive strides in his recovery.

How you’re helping: Your generosity enables ALDF to not only bring our own lawsuits, but also support and inform the unique anti-cruelty work that can only happen through our criminal justice work.



VICTORY: CRUEL CAT DECLAWING BANNED IN MASSACHUSETTS

With your support, ALDF is fighting to protect cats from painful, unnecessary declawing.

January brought the first major legislative victory of 2025 when Massachusetts enacted a ban on declawing, following extensive advocacy from our in-house legislative experts and Massachusetts-based supporters. The new law makes Massachusetts the third U.S. state to enact a comprehensive declaw ban; Virginia has also banned the procedure in most cases, and numerous cities have passed their own local bans.



ALDF Senior Legislative Affairs Manager Stephanie Harris (second from left) stands alongside Gov. Maura Healey (center) at a signing event enacting the declaw ban.

A Misunderstood Practice

Many well-meaning cat guardians are unaware that declawing doesn't just remove the claws, but the entire last digit of a cat's toes — similar to

cutting off a person's fingers at the last knuckle. Because cats typically walk on their toes, removing the toe tips can be not only painful, but also requires a declawed cat to fundamentally change the way they walk — setting them up for further musculoskeletal issues down the road.

Cats who've been declawed also frequently develop related behavioral issues, which can make a declawed cat more likely to be surrendered to an animal shelter. They may become more likely to bite, since their first line of defense — scratching — is no longer an option. And many declawed cats develop new problems with litterbox use, including avoiding litter entirely because stepping on it may hurt their painful paws.

You're Making a Difference for Cats

Your support enables ALDF to be a leader in passing declaw bans across the country. Declaw bans prohibit elective declawing (such as to prevent furniture-scratching), but provide exemptions for situations when the procedure is medically necessary for the cat (such as in the treatment of cancer of the nail bed).

Thanks to you, we're currently supporting proposed declaw bans in multiple additional states. Learn more at aldf.org/protectpaws.

VICTORY FOR DOGS AND CALIFORNIA CONSUMERS

In a momentous ruling, the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California handed victimized puppies a win in our lawsuit against a network of puppy-mill profiteers.

In denying the defendants' attempt to have our case dismissed, the Court held that the puppy-purchasing plaintiffs we represent have properly shown that the network of defendants "engaged in ... acts demonstrating a long-term scheme to defraud Plaintiffs into believing that puppies being sold in California pet stores were 'rescue' dogs rather than sourced from puppy mills."

In the case, we argue that an Iowa-based puppy broker called JAKS Puppies, and its associates, conspired with California pet stores to violate federal racketeering laws and state animal welfare and consumer protection laws.

The class-action lawsuit was brought on behalf of California dog guardians who were deceived into buying high-priced puppies they were told were "rescues," but had actually been "laundered" through fake rescue groups to hide their true origins in puppy mills. This violates California law, which bans the retail sale of mill-bred puppies.

Smith & Lowney PLLC is our co-counsel in the case. Learn more about how you're protecting vulnerable puppies at aldf.org/pupmills.



ANIMAL PROFILE:

Name: Sonnie

Case: *Carey v. JAKS Puppies*

Background: Born in a puppy mill, Sonnie was illegally "laundered" through a fake rescue group and transported cross-country, where she was fraudulently advertised and sold as a "rescue puppy" in a California pet store. Her puppy mill history, where animals commonly receive no veterinary care, is likely the cause of her lifelong back and spinal problems.

Status: Sonnie's loving guardian, who'd intended to adopt a rescue dog, is among the plaintiffs in our class-action lawsuit against the puppy-laundering ring.

How you're helping: You're powering the legal and legislative fight to protect animals like Sonnie from puppy mill cruelty, and consumers from falling victim to fraud.



FIGHTING FOR FARMED ANIMALS

From chickens to cows to farmed fish and beyond, you enable ALDF to be vigilant in the fight to protect farmed animals and stop animal agriculture interests from harming animals, consumers, and the environment. Learn more at aldf.org/farmedanimals.



Lawsuit Filed: Taking On the Meat Industry's False Advertising

Nearly all chickens and turkeys raised for the meat industry in the U.S. spend their short lives on factory farms — never even having the chance to venture outside. Sadly, the chickens and turkeys used in agribusiness giant Perdue Farms' "Fresh Line" products are no different.

But you wouldn't know that from looking at the Fresh Line product labels, which feature highly misleading graphics of birds enjoying leafy pastures outside a barn and under a bright sun.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is legally required to review these labels for accuracy — yet the agency turned a blind eye and allowed Perdue to use the misleading imagery. It's just one example of the agency's failure to protect consumers.

In *Animal Legal Defense Fund v. Rollins*, filed in federal court in February, we're taking this fight to the federal government — demanding the USDA do its job to ensure consumers can learn the facts about the products they eat.

Victory: Judge Rules Our Tyson Foods Lawsuit Can Proceed

In yet another case of the factory farming industry misleading the public, factory farming corporation Tyson Foods had the audacity to market beef products as “climate-smart” — even though the company’s greenhouse gas emissions, which are primarily driven by its beef production, are larger than that of some entire *countries*.

Our coalition, which includes Earthjustice, Edelson PC, and FarmSTAND, is representing the Environmental Working Group in a lawsuit demanding that Tyson stop this false marketing. In February, a federal court sided with the animals in allowing our case to proceed, denying Tyson’s request to dismiss the case in memorable terms: “...[E]ven if Tyson were reducing its beef emissions by 10 or 30 percent as advertised, that would only constitute a drop in the bucket of environmental harm that Tyson is alleged to cause.”



Victory: Net-Pen Fish Farming Banned in Washington

Following advocacy from ALDF, the Washington state Board of Natural Resources voted to ban commercial fish farming using net pens in state-owned waters. The decision is a major win against the inhumane and environmentally destructive finfish aquaculture industry.



Free Resource: The 2024 Animal Law Conference, including expert panels such as “Protecting Farmed Animals & Preserving Land Resources,” is now available to watch on demand! View each panel at aldf.org/alc24videos.

A LEGACY OF PROTECTION

What legacy do you want to leave for the animals? Creating your estate plan can provide you with peace of mind knowing your wishes for the people and causes you care about most are planned.

By joining the Justice Legacy Society with a gift in your estate, you can afford us the ability to continue to fight for animals into the future. Legacy gifts are essential to the success of our work to protect animals, and every contribution makes a difference.

To make a gift in your will or trust, all you need are a few key pieces of information which are included below:



Animal Legal Defense Fund

525 East Cotati Avenue

Cotati, CA 94931

Tax ID: 94-2681680

If you would like to discuss your legacy gift options or have any questions about making a gift 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/ShareYourLegacy.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT: Get your crow-themed Justice for Animals T-shirt at aldf.org/shop.



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