

Better Collaboration, Accountability, and Regulatory Enforcement (CARE) for Animals Act

([H.R.5041](#) | [S.2555](#))

Introduced by Reps. Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA-14), Mike Quigley (D-IL-5), and Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), John Kennedy (R-LA)



AWA enforcement is needed to deter violators. Animals need Congress' help!

The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) requires research facilities, exhibitors, and breeders/dealers to meet basic standards of animal care. This law is crucial to protecting over a million animals from inhumane care and treatment, yet many facilities are getting away with egregious abuses. Without strong enforcement, facilities such as puppy mills and roadside zoos have no meaningful deterrent to violating the law.

There are currently only three Administrative Law Judges for the entire U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). As a result, only so many enforcement actions can go through the system each year. While DOJ may currently ask courts in AWA cases to issue injunctions to prevent continued unlawful mistreatment of animals, this bill would authorize DOJ to seek license revocations, civil penalties, and the use of forfeiture to seize and remove animals experiencing harmful treatment.

DOJ Assistance with AWA Cases

Even if DOJ only brings a handful of animal cases annually, it sends an important signal to the regulated community. For example, in 2022, DOJ brought a [case](#) against a big cat exhibitor (Jeffrey Lowe and Tiger King LLC) for chronic

Steve Kruse, the owner of Stonehenge Kennel with nearly 800 dogs, received numerous repeat direct violations for failing to take injured dogs to a veterinarian, including some who could barely walk. Since 2015, more than 125 injured dogs have been found at Kruse's facility, including visibly emaciated, sick, injured, and even deceased dogs. As recently as March 2023, the USDA found multiple dogs suffering from issues such as bleeding wounds, lameness, crusted eyes, swellings, and other painful issues – issues that Kruse had been repeatedly cited for year after year. While Kruse did receive a 21-day suspension in December 2015, this was the result of him throwing a bag containing two dead puppies at a USDA inspector, and not for the above-cited care violations. In March 2023, Kruse received another 21-day suspension for willfully failing to properly provide medical treatment for dogs in his care and failing to meet minimum standards for animals.

Unfortunately, Kruse is just one of many examples where strong federal enforcement has failed to occur. HSUS/HSLF would be more than happy to share the information we have on other facilities.

AWA and Endangered Species Act violations. The federal government seized 68 big cats, including lions and tigers, and sought civil forfeiture pursuant to the ESA forfeiture provision. This case is an important victory for deterring bad actors in exotic animal exhibitions.

Additionally, in May of 2022, DOJ filed a lawsuit detailing shocking violations of the AWA at a breeding facility owned by a company called Envigo. Government inspectors found that beagles there were being killed instead of receiving veterinary treatment for easily treatable conditions; nursing mother beagles were denied food; the food that they did receive contained maggots, mold and feces; and over an eight-week period, 25 beagle puppies died from cold exposure. Other dogs suffered from injuries when they were attacked by other dogs in overcrowded conditions. DOJ sought action through an injunction against Envigo and a federal court enjoined Envigo from conducting activity at the Cumberland facility. Envigo entered into a [settlement agreement](#) leading to the transfer of roughly 4,000 beagles to animal adoption organizations.

The bill gives DOJ more tools to strengthen AWA enforcement:

1. **Provides DOJ with information on AWA violators:** Requires a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the USDA and DOJ to encourage greater collaboration and ensure DOJ has access to evidence needed to initiate cases.
2. **Provides DOJ with more enforcement remedies under the AWA:** While DOJ may currently ask courts in AWA cases to issue injunctions to prevent continued unlawful mistreatment of animals, this bill would authorize DOJ to seek license revocations, civil penalties, and the use of forfeiture to seize and remove animals experiencing harmful treatment.



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