

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4562

To direct the Attorney General to conduct a study on animal cruelty, and
for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 19, 2026

Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. TILLIS) introduced the following bill; which
was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To direct the Attorney General to conduct a study on animal
cruelty, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Animal Violence Ex-
5 poses Real Threat of Future Violence Act of 2026” or the
6 “AVERT Future Violence Act of 2026”.

7 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

8 In this Act:

9 (1) **ANIMAL CRUELTY.**—The term “animal cru-
10 elty”—

1 (A) means—

2 (i) intentionally, knowingly, or reck-
3 lessly harming or killing an animal, includ-
4 ing maiming, mutilating, torturing, wound-
5 ing, poisoning, engaging in animal fight-
6 ing, and sexually abusing an animal, or at-
7 tempting to do so; or

8 (ii) intentionally or knowingly neglect-
9 ing or depriving an animal of necessary
10 sustenance or shelter, or attempting to do
11 so; and

12 (B) does not include any conduct that is—

13 (i) customary and normal veterinary,
14 agricultural husbandry, or other animal
15 management practice;

16 (ii) the slaughter of animals for food;

17 (iii) hunting, trapping, fishing, a
18 sporting activity not otherwise prohibited
19 by Federal law, predator control, or pest
20 control;

21 (iv) medical or scientific research;

22 (v) necessary to protect the life of a
23 person; or

24 (vi) performed as part of euthanizing
25 an animal.

(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible entity” means—

(A) a State;

(B) a unit of local government;

(C) a State or local court (including a juvenile court);

(D) an Indian Tribe; or

(E) any other organization that has a documented history of effective work identifying, intervening in, preventing, reducing, or otherwise responding to animal cruelty, or animal cruelty as related to interpersonal violence (as determined by the Secretary), including—

(i) any organization that works directly with or on behalf of pets, service animals, emotional support animals, or horses and collaborates with any organization referred to in subparagraphs (A) through (D), including—

(I) an animal shelter; and

(II) an animal welfare organization;

(ii) any organization that provides mental health services to perpetrators and survivors of crime;

1 (iii) any organization that develops
 2 and provides training programs for law en-
 3 forcement, judges, prosecutors, other court
 4 personnel, veterinarians, or mental health
 5 professionals;

6 (iv) a domestic violence and sexual as-
 7 sault victim service provider;

8 (v) a domestic violence and sexual as-
 9 sault coalition;

10 (vi) a child abuse victim service pro-
 11 vider;

12 (vii) a provider of services to families
 13 under the supervision of the courts or de-
 14 partments of child and family services;

15 (viii) an elder abuse victim service
 16 provider;

17 (ix) a community-based and culturally
 18 specific organization; and

19 (x) any other nonprofit, nongovern-
 20 mental organization.

21 **SEC. 3. STUDY ON ANIMAL CRUELTY, UNDERLYING FAC-**
 22 **TORS, AND FUTURE ACTS OF HUMAN VIO-**
 23 **LENCE.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the
 25 date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, act-

1 ing through the Director of the National Institute of Jus-
 2 tice, shall carry out a study—

- 3 (1) on the underlying factors that contribute to
- 4 acts of animal cruelty committed by individuals; and
- 5 (2) that analyzes acts of animal cruelty as a
- 6 predictor of future violence against humans.

7 (b) CONTENT OF STUDY.—In carrying out the study
 8 under subsection (a), the Director of the National Insti-
 9 tute of Justice shall—

- 10 (1) specifically examine, through a review of
- 11 scientific literature, original research, and expert
- 12 input, as appropriate—

- 13 (A) evidence-informed risk factors associ-
- 14 ated or correlated with individuals who commit
- 15 acts of animal cruelty;

- 16 (B) whether certain acts of animal cruelty
- 17 can be correlated with certain evidence-in-
- 18 formed risk factors (such as whether the acts of
- 19 animal torturing, tormenting, mutilation, maim-
- 20 ing, poisoning, organized abuse, such as animal
- 21 fighting, sexual abuse, abandonment, or neglect,
- 22 are associated with the same or different evi-
- 23 dence-informed risk factors);

1 (C) whether certain acts of animal cruelty
 2 demonstrate a tendency or likelihood to commit
 3 a future act of violence against humans;

4 (D) the types of violence against humans
 5 most commonly associated with certain acts of
 6 animal cruelty (such as domestic violence and
 7 assault); and

8 (E) recommendations of areas in which fu-
 9 ture research on animal cruelty is needed; and
 10 (2) develop best practices for—

11 (A) early interventions that prevent acts of
 12 animal cruelty; and

13 (B) interventions with individuals who
 14 have committed acts of animal cruelty to pre-
 15 vent future acts of violence.

16 (c) RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Director of the Na-
 17 tional Institute of Justice shall submit to Congress a re-
 18 port containing the specific policy recommendations, based
 19 on the study conducted under this section, for legislative
 20 and regulatory action at the Federal, State, and local lev-
 21 els to—

22 (1) address the evidence-informed risk factors
 23 that may contribute to acts of animal cruelty com-
 24 mitted by individuals; and

1 (2) develop effective interventions and diversion
2 strategies for both juvenile and non-juvenile offend-
3 ers who have been convicted of criminal offenses in-
4 volving animal cruelty that reduce the likelihood of
5 offenders committing future violent acts against
6 both humans and animals.

7 **SEC. 4. STOP FUTURE VIOLENCE GRANT PROGRAM.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General is author-
9 ized to establish a grant program to provide assistance to
10 eligible entities to develop and strengthen effective detec-
11 tion strategies, and early intervention or diversion re-
12 sources, to stop acts of animal cruelty and rehabilitate of-
13 fenders.

14 (b) USE OF FUNDS.—A grant awarded under this
15 section may be used to provide personnel, training, tech-
16 nical assistance, data collection, and other resources for
17 the apprehension, prosecution, adjudication, and mental
18 and behavioral health treatment of persons committing
19 acts of animal cruelty, for the rehabilitation of perpetra-
20 tors and the prevention of future acts of animal cruelty
21 or violence against humans, and specifically, for the pur-
22 poses of—

23 (1) training law enforcement officers, judges,
24 other court personnel, prosecutors, and mental

1 health professionals to more effectively identify and
 2 respond to acts of animal cruelty;

3 (2) developing, training, or expanding units of
 4 law enforcement officers, judges, other court per-
 5 sonnel, prosecutors, and mental health professionals
 6 specifically addressing acts of animal cruelty;

7 (3) developing and implementing more effective
 8 police, court, prosecution, mental health, and early
 9 intervention policies, protocols, orders, and services
 10 specifically devoted to preventing, identifying, and
 11 responding to acts of animal cruelty; and

12 (4) developing, installing, or expanding data
 13 collection and communication systems, including
 14 computerized systems, linking police, prosecutors,
 15 and courts, or for the purpose of identifying,
 16 classifying, and tracking arrests, protection orders,
 17 violations of protection orders, prosecutions, and
 18 convictions for acts of animal cruelty.

19 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

20 There are authorized to be appropriated—

21 (1) for the purposes of carrying out section 3,
 22 \$2,000,000, to remain available until expended; and

23 (2) for the purposes of carrying out section 4,
 24 \$2,000,000, to remain available until expended.

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