

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8480

To amend title 18, United States Code, to increase the penalties for animal crushing, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 23, 2026

Mr. GOTTHEIMER (for himself and Mr. LAWLER) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To amend title 18, United States Code, to increase the penalties for animal crushing, 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 “Protect our Pets Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. INCREASED PENALTIES FOR ANIMAL CRUSHING.**

6 Subsection (c) of section 48 of title 18, United States
7 Code, is amended to read as follows:

8 “(c) PENALTIES.—Whoever violates this section shall
9 be—

1 “(1) in the case of a first offense, fined under
2 this title, imprisoned for not more than 10 years, or
3 both; and

4 “(2) in the case of a second or subsequent of-
5 fense, fined under this title, imprisoned for not more
6 than 15 years, or both.”.

7 **SEC. 3. ABANDONMENT OR ENDANGERMENT OF ANIMALS**
8 **ON FEDERAL LAND PROHIBITED.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 of title 18, United
10 States Code, is amended by inserting after section 48 the
11 following:

12 **“§ 48A. Abandonment or endangerment of animals**

13 “(a) OFFENSE.—Whoever, in or affecting interstate
14 or foreign commerce, or on Federal land, knowingly aban-
15 dons a domesticated animal or commits an act of violence
16 that endangers a domesticated animal, shall be—

17 “(1) in the case of a first offense, fined under
18 this title, imprisoned for not more than 10 years, or
19 both; and

20 “(2) in the case of a second or subsequent of-
21 fense, fined under this title, imprisoned for not more
22 than 15 years, or both.

23 “(b) EXCEPTIONS.—This section does not apply with
24 regard to any conduct that is—

1 “(1) a customary and normal veterinary, agri-
2 cultural husbandry, or other animal management
3 practice;

4 “(2) the slaughter of animals for food;

5 “(3) hunting, trapping, fishing, a sporting ac-
6 tivity not otherwise prohibited by Federal law, pred-
7 ator control, or pest control;

8 “(4) medical or scientific research;

9 “(5) necessary to protect the life or property of
10 a person; or

11 “(6) performed as part of euthanizing an ani-
12 mal.

13 “(c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ‘domes-
14 ticated animal’ means a living non-human mammal, bird,
15 reptile, or amphibian, whether kept for pleasure or com-
16 mercial purposes.”.

17 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of section
18 sections for chapter 3 of title 18, United States Code, is
19 amended by inserting after section 48 the following:

“48A. Abandonment or endangerment of animals.”.

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