

Utah Senate Committee Approves Animal Abuse Bill

If signed into law, torturing pets would become a felony in the state.

Posted: February 03, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

A Utah State Senate committee has given its approval to a bill that would make it a low-level felony to torture cats and other pets.

On Feb. 2, 2007, the Utah Senate's Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment Committee Senate voted 4-3 in favor of Senate Bill 190, known as the "Felony Level Animal Torture" bill.

The bill, if signed into law, would make the intentional torture of a pet or other animal a third-degree felony. It specifically exempts, however, animals used for agricultural purposes.

The bill's sponsor, Sen. Gene Davis (D-Salt Lake) told the committee that the bill was amended to protect ranchers, rodeos, zoos and hunters.

Under current law, animal torture is a misdemeanor and perpetrators face no more than a year in jail. However, under SB 190, anyone convicted of the offense would face up to five years in prison.

The bill now goes on to the full Senate for discussion and voting. In 2006, a similar bill was voted down before making it through to the full Senate.