F I S C A L   I M P A C T   R E P O R T

	ORIGINAL DATE	02/21/13		
SPONSOR Lewis	**LAST UPDATED**		**HM**	46

SHORT TITLE	Create Domestic Animal Abuse Database	**SB**	

ANALYST Wojahn

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY13	**FY14**	**FY15**	**3 Year Total Cost**	**Recurring or Nonrecurring**	**Fund Affected**
Total	NFI	NFI	NFI			

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION
LFC Files

Responses Received From
Department of Public Safety (DPS)
Department of Health (DOH)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Memorial 46 requests that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Department of Health (DOH) examine the usefulness and cost of creating an animal abuse database focusing on pets and domestic animals for law enforcement investigations and public health purposes.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The DPS and the DOH report no fiscal impact, yet administratively internal and external resources would be required to set up and maintain the animal abuse database.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Current statutes stipulate increased criminal penalties for multiple convictions of animal crimes, yet there is no state database tracking these offenders. According to the DOH, the correlation between animal abuse and violence acts directed at humans has been established by extensive studies, as well as criminal records and confessions. For example, 70 percent of animal abusers had criminal records including crimes of violence, property, drugs, or disorderly behavior (Arluke & Luke, 1997). Another study indicated that 50 percent of schoolyard shooters had histories of animal cruelty (Verlinden, Herson, Thomas, 2000). Still another study revealed that

61.5 percent of animal abuse offenders had also committed assault, 17 percent had committed sexual assault, 8 percent had arson convictions and that animal abuse was a better predictor of sexual assault than previous convictions for homicide, arson or firearms offenses (Clarke, 2002). Another study found that 48 percent of rapists and 30 percent of child molesters committed animal abuse during their childhood or adolescence (Tingle, Barnard, *et al*, 1986).

As an indicator of probable perpetrators of domestic violence, one study found that animal abuse was one of the four most prominent indicators of risk for becoming a batterer (Walton-Moss *et al*, 2005). Another study found that 71 percent of battered women said their partners harmed, killed and threatened pets, with 75 percent of the incidents occurring in the presence of the victim as a means of intimidating and controlling them (Ascionne, Weber & Wood, 1997). This dynamic in domestic violence where children are present has a secondary impact as well, with another study reporting 32 percent of battered women disclosing that their children also hurt or killed animals, replicating the behavior of the batterer. Confirming this correlation was another study finding that children exposed to domestic violence were three times more likely to be cruel to animals (Currie, 2006).

As an indicator of child abuse, animal abuse was reported in 88 percent of families investigated for physical child abuse, and 33 percent of the abused children had in turn abused animals, using them as scapegoats for their anger, resulting in 11 times more dog bites and attacks in these homes (DeViney, Dickert & Lockwood, 1983). Also, finding animals to be targets of child anger was another study that discovered sexually abused children were five times more likely to abuse animals (Ascione, Friedrich, Health, & Hayashi, 2003). And, 62 percent to 76 percent of animal cruelty in the home occurs in front of children (Faver & Strand, 2003). Tragically, children's witnessing animal cruelty was the largest predictor of future violent behavior, with a child witness 8 times more likely to become a perpetrator (DeGue & DiLillo, 2009).

Consequently, establishing an animal abuse data base could potentially enhance efforts to more accurately identify "at-risk" families and direct limited resources and services to neighborhoods and in communities where "at-risk" families are concentrated. Lastly, perhaps it would be useful to include the Children, Youth, and Families Department in this memorial.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The DPS reports a resource would be assigned from the Information Technology Applications Development Bureau to assess the scope and time required to develop a database for tracking abuse to pets and domestic animals. This employee would contact resources internal and external to the DPS to discern appropriate data points required for accurate tracking of offenses including investigating data extraction from state law enforcement crime reports and from other state agency sources.

An investment of time and resources by existing DOH personnel would also be necessary.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Networking with municipalities through police departments, animal control and animal shelters would be beneficial because of the information/databases they may already have in place.

MEW/svb