



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

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New Poll Shows North Dakota Voters Want Felony-Level Penalties for Malicious Cruelty to Companion Animals

A statewide public opinion survey shows that by more than a four-to-one margin, North Dakota voters would support a measure to establish felony-level penalties for extreme and malicious acts of cruelty to companion animals. North Dakota is currently one of only three states in the nation (with Idaho and South Dakota) that still treats extreme cruelty to pets as a weak misdemeanor.

“The state’s current lax cruelty laws do not represent the interests of countless animal lovers across North Dakota and they desperately need to be strengthened,” said JoDee Foss of Pet Project Humane Society, based in Dickinson, N.D.

Conducted by Lake Research Partners, the poll reveals that North Dakota voters want to protect companion animals from deliberate cruelty and say they will vote to make it a felony to intentionally abuse those animals. Support for such a measure is both broad and deep and extends across the state’s geographic, demographic and partisan groups.

A strong majority of voters would vote to support felony-level companion animal cruelty laws (63 percent), while very few are opposed (17 percent). There is also real intensity behind support for the measure with 41 percent of voters indicating they would *strongly vote yes* (only 8 percent would strongly vote no).

“Right now our state’s cruelty laws are sadly lagging behind those of the rest of the country,” said Alison Smith of Triple H Miniature Horse Rescue, based in Mandan, N.D. “North Dakotans want better protections for our companion animals.”

“North Dakotans believe that cruelty to our companion animals cannot be tolerated and offenders should receive more than a slap on the wrist,” said Anne Sterling, Midwest regional director for The Humane Society of the United

States. "Burning an expensive painting of your dog should not carry a tougher penalty than burning your actual dog. It's time for North Dakota's laws to come into line with North Dakotan values."

**Poll Methodology: Lake Research Partners designed and administered this telephone survey, using professional interviewers, to 505 likely November 2012 voters. The statewide survey was conducted November 14-20, 2011, using a list of registered voters with participation in similar elections. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 4.4 percentage points, and larger for sub-groups.*

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