



ANIMAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

2018 U.S. Animal Protection Laws RankingsSM

Comparing Overall Strength & Comprehensiveness

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2018 U.S. Animal Protection Laws Rankings ReportSM

Animal Legal Defense Fund Annual Study Ranks Laws Across the Country

- *Featuring New Categories and Methodology like Courtroom Animal Advocate Programs*
- *2018's Major Trend: Possession Bans for Convicted Offenders*
- *Most-Improved States include Louisiana and Massachusetts*

January 2019

The Animal Legal Defense Fund announces the publication of the 2018 U.S. Animal Protection Laws Rankings ReportSM. The longest-running and most authoritative report of its kind, the Rankings Report assesses the relative strengths and weaknesses of each U.S. state's and territory's animal protection laws, and ranks them accordingly. Holding strong at the top for eleven years, Illinois has maintained its rank as first in the nation for animal protection laws, followed by Oregon (2), Maine (3), Colorado (4), and Massachusetts (5). Both Colorado and Massachusetts are new to our "Best Five" states for animals, and in fact Massachusetts is one of the most-improved states this year. For the twelfth year in a row, Kentucky has ranked lowest and continues to have the weakest animal protection laws on the books in the United States. Other states ranking in the bottom five were Mississippi (49), Iowa (48), Wyoming (47), and New Mexico (46).

New and Improved Methodology

The Animal Legal Defense Fund first began publishing the annual Rankings Report in 2006, and in those thirteen years the Report's methodology has largely remained the same. While this has provided consistency in allowing meaningful comparisons to be made year to year, given the changing landscape of animal protection laws, an update was in order in 2018.

Over the past thirteen years, the scope and depth of animal protection laws have changed dramatically. Jurisdictions have increased penalties for offenders, expanded and updated the legal protections that animal victims receive, and innovated new procedural mechanisms to enforce those laws. In response to the ever-evolving nature of the law, this year the Animal Legal Defense Fund has added five new categories to our Rankings methodology: (1) Definition of "Animal"; (2) Courtroom Animal Advocate Programs; (3) Hot Cars; (4) Civil Nuisance Abatement; and (5) Breed-Specific Legislation.

Definition of “Animal”

The Rankings have always considered how states define the term “animal” in our Rankings, but we are now taking a more critical look at which species are included under the umbrella of cruelty laws, and which species are left unprotected. In updating our scoring system, changes were made to more accurately represent how a law protects *all* animals at various stages of a case.

Courtroom Animal Advocate Programs

The second new Rankings category accounts for new laws relating to Courtroom Animal Advocate Programs, or “CAAPs.” “These programs take monumental steps forward in recognizing animals as crime victims,” says Animal Legal Defense Fund attorney Kathleen Wood. “CAAPs give animal victims a voice inside the criminal courtroom that they might not otherwise have.” Currently, only two states allow advocates to speak on behalf of an animal victim—Rhode Island and Connecticut. Rhode Island allows a state veterinarian or RISPCA agent to act as an animal advocate and make recommendations before a court. Connecticut revolutionized this concept in 2016 by enacting “Desmond’s Law,” which allows the court to appoint an attorney to advocate “in the interests of justice” in any case concerning a cat or dog.

Hot Cars

The third new Rankings category looks at the growing trend of laws concerning animals left unattended in motor vehicles. With so many tragic stories of companion animals dying in the summer heat, the public is becoming more cognizant of the danger of leaving animals in hot cars. Currently 30 states and the District of Columbia have laws addressing this issue, with three of those laws passed in 2018. Pennsylvania passed a law permitting law enforcement, animal control officers, and other officials to enter unattended vehicles and rescue a dog or cat that is in imminent danger. Kansas and Louisiana both passed “Good Samaritan” laws, which grant civil immunity to civilians who break into a car to rescue a companion animal after taking other important steps, like contacting law enforcement.

Civil Nuisance Abatement

The fourth new category examines civil nuisance abatement. Civil nuisance statutes empower citizens to take action and stop animal crimes from continuing. In many states, citizens can sue to abate nuisances like prostitution, gambling, and drugs. Legislatures have proscribed certain activities as “per se” nuisances, meaning that the plaintiff does not need to prove she was personally harmed. “Per se” nuisances are crimes that the state legislature has declared are, in and of themselves, harmful to the community. Currently, only North Carolina and Oregon have

explicitly declared animal cruelty as an abatable nuisance by statute. However, several other states have broadly written nuisance laws that may be applicable to animal cruelty; for example, in Arizona citizens can sue to abate any continuous criminal activity, which would include violations of Arizona’s criminal animal cruelty laws.

Breed-Specific Legislation

The fifth and final new category of the Rankings evaluates breed-specific legislation. Since the Rankings began in 2006, 22 different jurisdictions instituted statewide bans on breed-specific legislation. Those laws prohibit municipalities from enacting laws declaring certain dogs “dangerous” solely on the basis of breed. Such state statutes are another example of how animal protection laws continue to develop in new and unexpected ways.

Most-Improved States: Louisiana and Massachusetts

In 2018, both Louisiana and Massachusetts made substantial improvements to their animal protection laws, making them our substantively “most improved” states of the year.

Both Louisiana and Massachusetts passed comprehensive laws banning the sexual assault of animals. Like many other states, Louisiana and Massachusetts bestiality prohibitions were originally part of unconstitutional laws banning sodomy and other “crimes against nature” which failed to adequately protect animals in those states. However this year Louisiana and Massachusetts have now joined the growing trend of updating and strengthening their bestiality laws to bring them into the 21st century. Both states’ new laws fully define the crime, and also give the court important tools in sentencing. These laws require a convicted offender to forfeit all animals, and prohibit the offender from owning or possessing any animals for at least 5 years. Louisiana’s new law also requires convicted offenders to undergo a psychological evaluation and participate in any recommended treatment. These sentencing tools are crucially important for preventing recidivism—potentially saving future animal victims from harm.

Louisiana also passed two other animal protection laws concerning the safety of dogs and cats in extreme weather conditions. As previously mentioned, Louisiana passed a “Good Samaritan” law empowering civilians to rescue dogs and cats trapped in unattended vehicles who are in danger of suffering physical harm or death. The second law prohibits tying or tethering a cat or dog outdoors in extreme weather conditions, such as hurricanes or floods.

Massachusetts’s new bestiality statute was part of the state’s comprehensive PAWS II Act, a bill that made improvements to numerous animal protection laws. Among those new protections are a specific ban against drowning animals and a requirement that landlords inspect vacated properties within three days to ensure no animals were left abandoned. Finally, PAWS II adds several new statutes regarding cross-reporting. As many studies have documented, there is a

strong link between animal cruelty and violence against humans—particularly child abuse and elder abuse. Massachusetts’s new laws ensure that departments responsible for investigating these various forms of abuse regularly communicate with one another, and report suspected abuse to the proper authorities.

New Trend: Possession Bans

Possession bans are a post-conviction remedy, allowing courts to prohibit convicted animal abusers from owning or living in the same household as an animal—or even from having contact with an animal. Currently 24 states have “permissive” possession bans authorized by statute, meaning that it is up to the court to decide whether to prohibit a defendant from owning or possessing animals. Twelve states have “mandatory” possession bans, which usually require courts to prohibit an animal abuser from owning or possessing animals for a period of time—typically five years following a misdemeanor conviction and fifteen years following a felony conviction for animal cruelty.

This year, seven states have created or strengthened their possession ban statutes. As previously mentioned, Louisiana and Massachusetts now have mandatory possession bans following a bestiality conviction. Florida law now explicitly permits a judge to prohibit a convicted offender from possessing or owning any animals. Rhode Island previously had a “permissive” possession ban, which has now been made mandatory upon a conviction for animal cruelty. In addition to these innovations, California, Maryland, and Oregon all implemented small changes to continue improving their possession ban statutes.

“Possession bans are crucial to protecting future animal victims from harm,” says Lora Dunn, Director of the Animal Legal Defense Fund’s Criminal Justice Program. “Without pragmatic repercussions like bans on future animal ownership or contact, convicted offenders are statistically proven to prey on more animals in the future. That’s why it’s so important that animal protection laws are enforced—and that sentencing schemes reflect a comprehensive approach that addresses both offender and victim.”

Possession bans are one of the most effective ways to ensure a person convicted of animal cruelty does not reoffend. Along with mandatory psychological evaluation and treatment, these sentencing measures can ensure that the root of the issue is being addressed, and create sustainable change.

BEST FIVE STATES FOR ANIMALS	WORST FIVE STATES FOR ANIMALS
1. Illinois 2. Oregon 3. Maine 4. Colorado 5. Massachusetts	46. New Mexico 47. Wyoming 48. Iowa 49. Mississippi 50. Kentucky

	2018 Rank	State
TOP TIER	1	Illinois
	2	Oregon
	3	Maine
	4	Colorado
	5	Massachusetts
	6	Rhode Island
	7	Louisiana
	8	California
	9	Washington
	10	Indiana
	11	Texas
	12	Michigan
	13	Florida
	14	Virginia
	15	Pennsylvania

MIDDLE TIER	2018 Rank	State
	16	Nevada
	17	New Jersey
	18	Kansas
	19	New Hampshire
	20	Delaware
	21	Minnesota
	22	West Virginia
	23	Vermont
	24	Nebraska
	25	Tennessee
	26	Arizona
	27	Connecticut
	28	Oklahoma
	29	Ohio
	30	Arkansas
31	Wisconsin	
32	Maryland	
33	New York	
34	Missouri	
35	South Dakota	

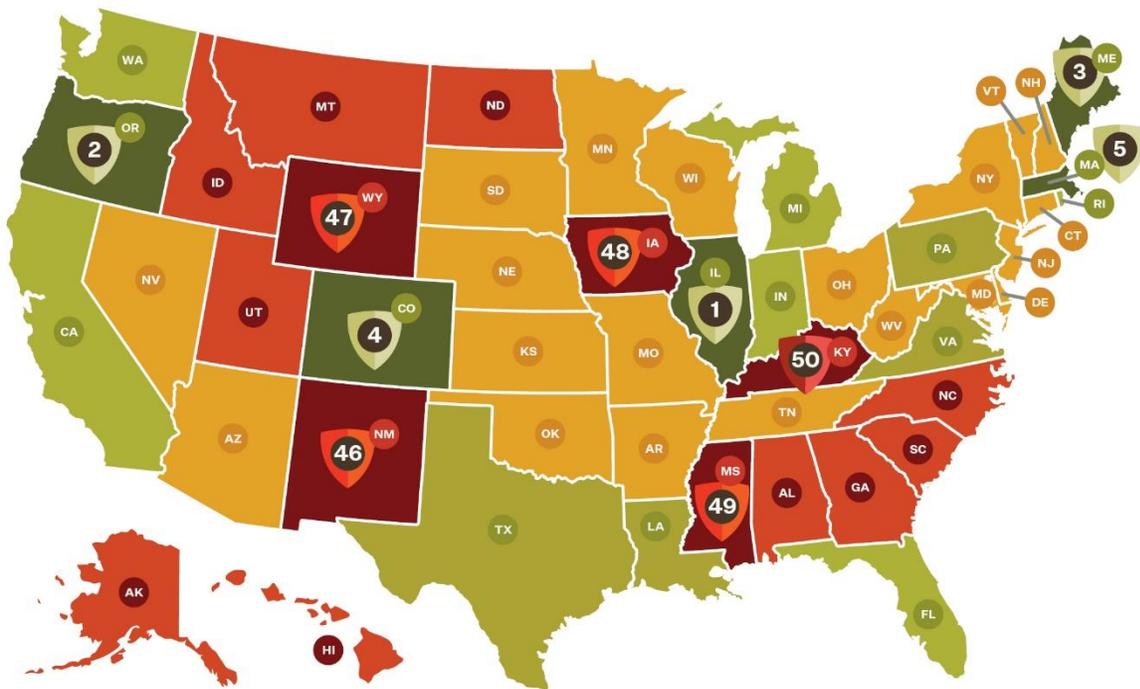
BOTTOM TIER	2018 Rank	State
	36	North Carolina
	37	Georgia
	38	Alabama
	39	Alaska
	40	South Carolina
	41	Hawaii
	42	Idaho
	43	Montana
	44	North Dakota
	45	Utah
	46	New Mexico
	47	Wyoming
	48	Iowa
49	Mississippi	
50	Kentucky	

U.S. TERRITORIES	2018 Rank	Territory
	1	District of Columbia
	2	U.S. Virgin Islands
	3	Puerto Rico
	4	Guam
	5	American Samoa Islands
	6	Northern Mariana Islands

2018 RANKINGS

United States animal protection laws.

The Animal Legal Defense Fund has published the 13th annual U.S. Animal Protection Laws Rankings Report. It is the longest-running and most authoritative of its kind, assessing the strength of each state's animal protection laws by examining over 3,400 pages of statutes. Each state is ranked based on nineteen different categories of animal protection.



RANKINGS BEST TO WORST

1 ILLINOIS	16 NEVADA	36 NORTH CAROLINA
2 OREGON	17 NEW JERSEY	37 GEORGIA
3 MAINE	18 KANSAS	38 ALABAMA
4 COLORADO	19 NEW HAMPSHIRE	39 ALASKA
5 MASSACHUSETTS	20 DELAWARE	40 SOUTH CAROLINA
6 RHODE ISLAND	21 MINNESOTA	41 HAWAII
7 LOUISIANA	22 WEST VIRGINIA	42 IDAHO
8 CALIFORNIA	23 VERMONT	43 MONTANA
9 WASHINGTON	24 NEBRASKA	44 NORTH DAKOTA
10 INDIANA	25 TENNESSEE	45 UTAH
11 TEXAS	26 ARIZONA	46 NEW MEXICO
12 MICHIGAN	27 CONNECTICUT	47 WYOMING
13 FLORIDA	28 OKLAHOMA	48 IOWA
14 VIRGINIA	29 OHIO	49 MISSISSIPPI
15 PENNSYLVANIA	30 ARKANSAS	50 KENTUCKY
	31 WISCONSIN	
	32 MARYLAND	
	33 NEW YORK	
	34 MISSOURI	
	35 SOUTH DAKOTA	

“BEST FIVE” STATES

Select Provisions	1. Illinois	2. Oregon	3. Maine	4. Col.	5. Mass.
Felony penalties available: Cruelty (C), Neglect (N), Fighting (F), Abandonment (A), Sexual Assault (S)	C, N, F, A, S	C, N, F, S	C, N, F, A	C, N, F, A	C, N, F, A, S
Adequate definitions/ standards of basic care	✓	✓	✓	✓	--
Full range of statutory protections (cruelty, neglect, abandonment, sexual assault, fighting)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increased penalties for repeat abusers and/or animal hoarders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increased penalties when abuse is committed in the presence of a minor	✓	✓	--	--	--
Courts may order forfeiture of abused animals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mandatory forfeiture of animals upon conviction	--	--	--	--	✓
Mandatory reporting of suspected cruelty by veterinarians and/or select non-animal-related agencies/professionals	✓	✓	--	✓	✓
Police officers have an affirmative duty to enforce animal protection laws	--	✓	✓	--	✓
Broad measures to mitigate and recover costs of care for abused pets seized by animal welfare agencies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Court may restrict ownership of animals after a conviction	✓	✓	✓	--	✓*
Mental health evaluations and/or counseling for offenders	✓	✓	✓	✓	--
Animals may be included in domestic violence protective orders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Courtroom Animal Advocate Program	--	--	--	--	--
“Hot car” law	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
Animal cruelty is an abatable civil nuisance	--	✓	--	--	--

*Limited to select species or crimes

“WORST FIVE” STATES

Select Provisions	46. New Mexico	47. Wyoming	48. Iowa**	49. Miss.	50. Kentucky
Felony penalties available: Cruelty (C), Neglect (N), Fighting (F), Abandonment (A), Sexual Assault (S)	C, F*	C, F*	C*, F	C*, F*, S	C*, F*
Adequate definitions/ standards of basic care	--	--	--	✓	--
Full range of statutory protections (cruelty, neglect, abandonment, sexual assault, fighting)	--	--	✓	--	--
Increased penalties for repeat abusers and/or animal hoarders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increased penalties when abuse is committed in the presence of a minor	--	--	--	--	--
Courts may order forfeiture of abused animals	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓*
Mandatory forfeiture of animals upon conviction	✓	--	--	--	--
Mandatory reporting of suspected cruelty by veterinarians and/or select non-animal-related agencies/professionals	--	--	--	--	†
Police officers have an affirmative duty to enforce animal protection laws	--	--	--	--	✓
Broad measures to mitigate and recover costs of care for abused pets seized by animal welfare agencies	✓	✓	✓	✓*	--
Court may restrict ownership of animals after a conviction	--	✓	--	✓*	--
Mental health evaluations and/or counseling for offenders	✓	--	✓	✓*	--
Animals may be included in domestic violence protective orders	--	--	✓	--	--
Courtroom Animal Advocate Program	--	--	--	--	--
“Hot car” law	--	--	--	--	--
Animal cruelty is an abatable civil nuisance	--	--	--	--	--

*Limited to select species **Ag gag state

† Veterinarians prohibited from reporting suspected animal cruelty

“BEST FIVE” STATES

STATE	Existing Strengths	Potential Improvements
1. Illinois	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felony penalties for cruelty, neglect, fighting, abandonment and sexual assault • Inclusive definition of “animal” • Adequate definitions/standards of basic care • Increased penalties for repeat animal abusers and animal hoarders • Mental health evaluations prior to sentencing • Mandatory counseling / anger management for certain offenders • Protective orders may include animals • Some mandatory cost-recovery measures for impounded animals • Pre-conviction forfeiture allowed • Court may order forfeiture of select animals on conviction • Court may order restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals upon conviction • Mandatory reporting of suspected animal cruelty by select non-animal-related agencies and veterinarians • Law enforcement officers may rescue animals trapped in hot cars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More comprehensive definitions/standards of basic care • Stronger felony provisions for neglect and abandonment • Increased penalties for offenders with prior domestic violence offenses • Broader cost mitigation & recovery measures • Mandatory forfeiture of any type of animal upon conviction • Mandatory restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals following a conviction • Animal fighting as RICO predicate offense • Court-calendar priority when animals are in custody • Courtroom Animal Advocate Program • Animal cruelty declared an abatable nuisance • Immunity for civilians rescuing animals from hot cars

STATE	Existing Strengths	Potential Improvements
2. Oregon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felony penalties for cruelty, neglect, and fighting • Thorough definitions/standards of basic care • Inclusive definition of “animal” • Increased penalties for repeat animal abusers, repeat domestic violence offenders, when abuse committed in the presence of a minor, and cases involving multiple animals • Limited pre-sentence mental health evaluations • Permissive court order for counseling/anger management • Protective orders may include animals • Court may order cost mitigation & recovery measures for impounded animals • Pre-conviction forfeiture allowed • Court may order forfeiture of animals on conviction • Mandatory restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals upon conviction • Mandatory reporting of suspected aggravated animal cruelty by veterinarians • Peace officers have an affirmative duty to enforce animal protection laws • Animal fighting is a predicate offense under state RICO laws • Strong animal fighting provisions • Comprehensive sexual assault of animals law • Animal cruelty is an abatable nuisance • Civilians have civil immunity for rescuing animals trapped in unattended vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felony penalties for abandonment • Mandatory terms of incarceration for certain offenders • Broader pre-sentence mental health evaluations • Mandatory restitution • Mandatory cost mitigation & recovery measures for impounded animals • Mandatory forfeiture on conviction • Mandatory reporting of suspected animal cruelty by select non-animal-related agencies • Mandatory reporting of all suspected animal cruelty by veterinarians • Court-calendar priority when animals are in custody • Courtroom Animal Advocate Program

STATE	Existing Strengths	Potential Improvements
3. Maine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felony penalties for cruelty, neglect, fighting, and abandonment • Inclusive definition of “animal” • Thorough definitions/standards of basic care • Increased penalties for repeat animal abusers • Limited pre-sentence mental health evaluations • Permissive court order for counseling/ anger management • Protective orders may include animals • Court may order cost recovery measures on conviction • Pre-conviction forfeiture allowed • Court may order forfeiture on conviction • Court may order restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals upon conviction • Permissive reporting of animal cruelty by select non-animal related agencies • Mandatory reporting of suspected aggravated animal cruelty by veterinarians • Peace officers have an affirmative duty to investigate animal protection law violations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger felony provisions for neglect • Increased penalties for crimes involving multiple animals, offenders with prior domestic violence offenses, and when abuse is committed in the presence of a minor • Mandatory cost mitigation & recovery measures for impounded animals, and restitution upon conviction • Mandatory forfeiture of an animal upon conviction • Mandatory restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals following a conviction • Mandatory reporting of suspected animal cruelty by select non-animal-related agencies • Mandatory reporting of all suspected animal cruelty by veterinarians • Court-calendar priority when animals are in custody • Felony penalty on first-offense sexual assault • Stronger animal fighting provisions • Animal fighting as RICO predicate offense • Courtroom Animal Advocate Program • Animal cruelty as an abatable nuisance

STATE	Existing Strengths	Potential Improvements
4. Colorado	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felony penalties for cruelty, neglect, fighting, and abandonment • Inclusive definition of “animal” • Adequate definitions/standards of basic care • Increased penalties for repeat animal abusers • Mandatory mental health evaluation following a conviction • Protective orders may include animals • Court may order cost recovery measures on conviction • Pre-conviction forfeiture allowed • Court may order forfeiture on conviction • Permissive reporting of animal cruelty by select non-animal related agencies • Mandatory reporting of suspected animal cruelty by veterinarians • Civilians have civil immunity for rescuing animals trapped in unattended vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace officers have an affirmative duty to investigate animal protection law violations • Stronger felony provisions for neglect • Increased penalties for crimes involving multiple animals, offenders with prior domestic violence offenses, and when abuse is committed in the presence of a minor • Mandatory cost mitigation & recovery measures for impounded animals, and restitution upon conviction • Mandatory forfeiture of an animal upon conviction • Mandatory restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals following a conviction • Mandatory reporting of suspected animal cruelty by select non-animal-related agencies • Court-calendar priority when animals are in custody • Felony penalty on first-offense sexual assault • Animal fighting as RICO predicate offense • Courtroom Animal Advocate Program • Animal cruelty as an abatable nuisance

STATE	Existing Strengths	Potential Improvements
5. Mass.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felony penalties for cruelty, neglect, fighting, sexual assault, and abandonment • Inclusive definition of “animal” • Increased penalties for repeat animal abusers • Protective orders may include animals • Court may order cost recovery measures on conviction • Pre-conviction forfeiture allowed • Mandatory forfeiture of an animal upon conviction • Permissive reporting of animal cruelty by select non-animal related agencies • Mandatory reporting of suspected aggravated animal cruelty by veterinarians • Peace officers have an affirmative duty to investigate animal protection law violations • Mandatory ownership and possession ban upon conviction for bestiality • Civilians have civil immunity for rescuing animals trapped in unattended vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough definitions/standards of basic care • Court order for counseling/ anger management • Increased penalties for crimes involving multiple animals, offenders with prior domestic violence offenses, and when abuse is committed in the presence of a minor • Mandatory cost mitigation & recovery measures for impounded animals, and restitution upon conviction • Mandatory restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals following a conviction for any animal cruelty crime • Mandatory reporting of suspected animal cruelty by select non-animal-related agencies • Court-calendar priority when animals are in custody • Animal fighting as RICO predicate offense • Courtroom Animal Advocate Program • Animal cruelty as an abatable nuisance

“WORST FIVE” STATES

STATE	Major Areas Needing Improvement
46. New Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felony provisions available only for fighting against select animals • No felony neglect or abandonment provisions • Inadequate definitions/standards of basic care • No increased penalties when abuse is committed in the presence of a minor, or for repeat domestic violence offenders or cases involving multiple animals • No statutory authority to allow protective orders to include animals • No provisions for possession or ownership bans after a conviction • No provisions for veterinarians or other select non-animal-related agencies/professionals to report suspected animal abuse • No duty for peace officers to enforce animal protection laws • No provisions for sexual assault
47. Wyoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felony provisions available only for fighting select animals • No felony neglect or abandonment provisions • Inadequate definitions/standards of basic care • No increased penalties when abuse is committed in the presence of a minor or for repeat domestic violence offenders • No mental health evaluations or counseling for offenders • No statutory authority to allow protective orders to include animals • Pre-conviction restitution only available for certain species • No mandatory forfeiture of animals upon conviction • No provisions for veterinarians or other select non-animal-related agencies/professionals to report suspected animal abuse • No duty for peace officers to enforce animal protection laws • No provisions for sexual assault

STATE	Major Areas Needing Improvement
48. Iowa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ag gag law • No felony provisions for first time cruelty to animals (only fighting) • Felony provisions available only for cruelty against select animals and fighting • No felony neglect or abandonment provisions • Inadequate definitions/standards of basic care • No increased penalties when abuse is committed in the presence of a minor or involves multiple animals • No statutory authority to allow protective orders to include animals • No mandatory forfeiture of animals upon conviction • No restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals following a conviction • No provisions for veterinarians or other select non-animal-related agencies/professionals to report suspected animal abuse • No duty for peace officers to enforce animal protection laws • Sexual assault statute poorly defined
49. Mississippi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No felony provisions for first time cruelty to animals (only fighting) • Felony provisions available only for cruelty against select animals and fighting select animals • No felony neglect or abandonment provisions • Inadequate definitions/standards of basic care • No increased penalties when abuse is committed in the presence of a minor or involves multiple animals • No statutory authority to allow protective orders to include animals • No mandatory forfeiture of animals upon conviction, and permissive forfeiture only available for select animals • Pre-conviction restitution only available for select animals • Restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals following a conviction only available for select animals • No mandatory reporting for veterinarians or other select non-animal-related agencies/professionals who suspect animal abuse • No duty for peace officers to enforce animal protection laws • Sexual assault statute poorly defined • Mental health evaluation and treatment only available in cases involving select species

STATE	Major Areas Needing Improvement
<p>50. Kentucky</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felony provisions available only for cruelty and fighting, both against only select animals • No felony provisions for neglect or abandonment • Inadequate definitions/standards of basic care • No increased penalties when abuse is committed in the presence of a minor or involves multiple animals • No mental health evaluations or counseling for offenders • No statutory authority to allow protective orders to include animals • No cost mitigation or recovery provisions for impounded animals, except for horses • No provisions for forfeiture of cruelly treated animals, other than horses • No restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals following a conviction • No provisions for select non-animal-related agencies/professionals to report suspected animal abuse • Veterinarians are prohibited from reporting suspected cruelty or fighting • No provisions for sexual assault

Methodology summary

The 56 jurisdictions included in the 2018 U.S. Animal Protection Laws Rankings ReportSM were numerically ranked based on their cumulative scores to 49 study questions covering 19 distinct animal protection laws categories. The report analyzed enacted laws only and did not review the separate issue of how these laws are enforced. Answers to the study questions were based primarily on the statutory data contained in the 3,400+ page compilation Animal Protection Laws of the United States (Thirteenth Edition)SM. The study questions were close-ended and the choices exhaustive and mutually exclusive. The questions were limited to the following categories:

Substantive Prohibitions

1. Definition of “Animal”
2. General Cruelty
3. Exemptions
4. Fighting & Racketeering
5. Sexual Assault

Procedural Matters

6. Maximum Penalties & Statute of Limitations
7. Cross Enforcement & Reporting
8. Veterinarian Reporting & Immunity
9. Law Enforcement Policies
10. Seizure
11. Courtroom Animal Advocate Program
12. Protection Orders
13. Restitution
14. Forfeiture & Possession Bans
15. Mental Health Treatment Sentencing

Miscellaneous Provisions

16. Hot Cars
17. Civil Nuisance Abatement
18. Ag-Gag Laws
19. Breed-Specific Legislation