

HB 1695 -- ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING

SPONSOR: Sparks

This bill requires animal control officers and animal humane investigators to be mandated reporters in cases of abuse and neglect of children, the elderly, and other vulnerable persons. Additionally, animal control officers and animal humane investigators will be required to receive one hour of training within the first 60 days of employment to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect in children, the elderly, and vulnerable persons.

This bill creates a mandated reporting requirement for certain mental health, educational, protective services, and law enforcement personnel to report cases of companion animal abuse or neglect to a hotline established by the Missouri Animal Control Association (MACA). A "companion animal" is defined in the bill as a living creature maintained by a household for companionship and not commercial purposes. MACA will provide the report of abuse or neglect to any duly-authorized law enforcement official, county or municipal animal control officer, or animal cruelty investigator. If the mandated reporter is an employee of an agency or political subdivision of the state and fails to make a report as required under this provision, the employer must send a written notice to the employee noting the failure and providing a reminder of the requirements of reporting companion animal abuse or neglect. Additionally, a mandated reporter who fails to make a report will be subject to discipline by his or her professional licensing board, as well as a fine, as described in the bill.

Finally, protective services employees with direct contact with children, the elderly, and vulnerable persons will be required to receive one hour of training within the first 60 days of employment to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect in companion animals.

This bill is similar to SB 91 (2023).