

HCS HB 910 -- ANIMAL ABUSE

SPONSOR: Mayhew

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Agriculture by a vote of 21 to 0, with 1 voting present. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Legislative by a vote of 9 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 910.

This bill establishes "Brown's law" in commemoration of veterinarian Senator Dr. Dan Brown. Under the bill, a person commits the offense of making a malicious false report of animal abuse if the person purposely makes a report that is known to be false with the purpose of causing a disruption, harassment, monetary loss, or disturbance of the peace of the owner of the animal. This offense is a class C misdemeanor. It is an absolute defense for a prosecution of the offense if the reporting party reported an incident of animal abuse out of good faith, with reasonable belief that an animal was being abused.

Additionally, this bill modifies the offense of animal abuse to provide that it is a class E felony if the suffering of an animal is the result of starvation, in addition to torture or mutilation, and that has been knowingly, instead of consciously, inflicted while the animal was alive.

This bill is the same as SB 541 (2025).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that farmers and other animal owners care about their animals, especially when it is their livelihood. This bill would protect them from false reports of abuse and would create harsher penalties for those who do abuse their animals by withholding food or water.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Mayhew; Arnie Dienoff; Missouri Alliance For Animal Legislation; Humane World for Animals; and Animal Legal Defense Legislative Fund.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.