



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION NO.: **421-02918**

BY: **Ms. MAY (SAANICH-GULF ISLANDS)**

DATE: **NOVEMBER 19, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **THE HONOURABLE DAVID LAMETTI**

Response by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Cruelty to animals

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

Our Government is committed to protecting children and animals from abuse. Canadians deserve and expect a society where our laws fully protect children and other vulnerable individuals from all forms of sexual abuse. Likewise, our animal cruelty laws must be broadened to appropriately address all aspects of animal fighting. Research has found strong correlations between animal cruelty offences and other crimes. For example, childhood sexual assault is also closely linked with exploiting animals for a sexual purpose. Animal fighting has often been linked to organized crime.

Bill C-84, *An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (bestiality and animal fighting)* will help achieve that goal by sending a clear signal that engaging in any sexual activity with an animal, including in front of a child, or compelling someone else to engage in such activities including a child, is a serious criminal offence. Bill C-84 will also expand the animal fighting provisions to help protect animals from being injured or killed as a result of being baited or forced to fight.

Public access to a list of individuals convicted of animal abuse offences raises privacy and constitutional concerns. It should be noted that the National Sex Offender Registry is only accessible to law enforcement.

The *Criminal Code* currently permits a court to prohibit a person convicted of certain animal cruelty offences from possessing an animal for any period that a court considers appropriate, and for a second or subsequent offence for

a minimum period of five years. If a person is serving a sentence in the community and is subject to an animal prohibition order, they are under the supervision of the criminal justice system and their address would be known to law enforcement. An animal abuse prohibition order often remains in place after the completion of the sentence, and can be ordered for a period of up to a lifetime. It is an offence to breach an animal prohibition order. Should a breach of a prohibition order come to the attention of law enforcement, the person's current address would be noted at that time.