



## **On the Positive Side: Support for Amended Version of New Mexico Animal Cruelty Laws**

**by Frank Bryce**

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The Doña Ana County Humane Society's (DACHS) Vice President, Tom Townsend, in the latest Critter Corner Section of the Las Cruces Sun News reported on their partnership with Senator Mary Jane Garcia, D-Doña Ana, to seek an amended version of the New Mexico Animal Cruelty Laws. The Humane Society of Southern New Mexico at its recent board meeting wholly supports and applauds this effort.

The current seemingly lax animal cruelty laws and loose interpretation allowed of them has been a subject of much concern and local discussion among animal advocates for several years. Much of that effort seemed focused on enforcement of existing laws through our local animal control departments and judicial system which was in many opinions hamstrung by the laws themselves.

The Sun News article states "DACHS studied the law and has recommended changes that would aid prosecutors with enhanced definitions and stiffer penalties." Mr. Townsend did an excellent job of describing the problems and the proposed changes in the Sun News article and the DACHS recommended changes are very well described in the information available at [www.donaanacountyhumanesocietyinc.org/images/pdfs/30-18-1-changes.pdf](http://www.donaanacountyhumanesocietyinc.org/images/pdfs/30-18-1-changes.pdf). Persons can pick up a copy at the DACHS office at 2405 W. Picacho Avenue (same office as SNAP) between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays. Additional information available is quick and condensed comparison of other states laws and New Mexico's.

Mr. Townsend also touched on the relationship between animal abuse and human violence. Only recently it was pointed out that this relationship is often referred to now as family violence. It probably cannot be stressed enough that animal abuse certainly has far reaching and strong influence on families affected by it. Having attended New Mexico Governor's Conferences on Animal Abuse and Human Violence and animal cruelty investigation courses, members of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico can attest to the common and often horrific results from the correlation of animal abuse and family violence including cases here in Doña Ana County.

The Humane Society of Southern New Mexico in support of Senator Mary Jane Garcia and the Doña Ana County Humane Society's effort to change these laws is urging its members, supporters and you, the residents of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County, to take a positive step forward and contact our governor, Susanna Martinez, at the Office of the Governor, 490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Room 400, Santa Fe, NM 87501 or call directly (505) 476-2200 and ask her to support this important effort during the upcoming legislative session.

Frank Bryce is President of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico. Interested guest authors should contact Humane Society of Southern New Mexico at 575-523-8020.