

Your Name
Your Address
City, State, Zip Code

Legislator Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Date

Dear (Legislator Name),

As a concerned animal advocate and constituent in Guilford County, I am writing to urge you to support and advocate for stricter animal cruelty laws. Never has this need been more horribly illustrated than in the recent case of Susie, the puppy who was set on fire and left to die. In late August 2009, a small puppy was found in a local Greensboro park near death with second and third-degree burns on over 60 percent of her body, a broken jaw and teeth, and covered in over 300 maggots. A veterinarian at the Guilford County Animal Shelter where Susie was delivered by the local Animal Control authorities estimated that Susie had been in this condition for approximately two weeks. This was determined by the age of the maggots on her body. Fortunately, Susie survived after months of treatments and ongoing medications. However, justice would not be served in this case. Because of a minimal previous criminal history, North Carolina structured sentencing guidelines would only allow the guilty party, 21-year-old Lashawn Whitehead, to serve 4-5 months and a suspended sentence, coupled with three years of supervised probation for this animal cruelty charge. If Mr. Whitehead had not been a previous criminal offender, his offense would have only been classified as a misdemeanor.

According to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, violent acts toward animals have long been recognized as indicators of a dangerous psychopathy that does not confine itself to animals. "Anyone who has accustomed himself to regard the life of any living creature as worthless is in danger of arriving also at the idea of worthless human lives," wrote humanitarian Dr. Albert Schweitzer. "Murderers ... very often start out by killing and torturing animals as kids," according to Robert K. Ressler, who developed profiles of serial killers for the FBI. Studies have now convinced sociologists, lawmakers, and the courts that acts of cruelty toward animals deserve our attention. They can be the first sign of a violent pathology that includes human victims.

Animal abuse is not just the result of a minor personality flaw in the abuser but rather a symptom of a deep mental disturbance. Research in psychology and criminology shows that people who commit acts of cruelty toward animals don't stop there; many of them move on to their fellow humans.

The FBI has found that a history of cruelty to animals is one of the traits that regularly appear in its computer records of serial rapists and murderers, and the standard diagnostic and treatment manual for psychiatric and emotional disorders lists cruelty to animals as a diagnostic criterion for conduct disorders.

The matter is urgent. Right now hundreds of animals all across our state are being abused and neglected. Without us – without you, they have no voice. As your constituent, I respectfully urge you to advocate and support efforts for tougher animal cruelty laws in North Carolina. A message needs to be sent to offenders that abuse will not be tolerated. Will you help us in sending this message? I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Your Name