## ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 350-ASSEMBLYMEN HARDY AND LEAVITT

## MARCH 22, 2021

## Referred to Committee on Judiciary

SUMMARY—Revises provisions relating to certain crimes against animals. (BDR 50-977)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: Increases or Newly
Provides for Term of Imprisonment in County or City
Jail or Detention Facility.

Effect on the State: Yes.

EXPLANATION – Matter in **bolded italics** is new; matter between brackets **fomitted material** is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to animals; requiring the Director of the State Department of Agriculture to select a nonprofit organization to establish and maintain an animal abuser registry website; setting forth certain requirements for the establishment and maintenance of the animal abuser registry website; requiring persons convicted of certain offenses against animals to register with the animal abuser registry website; requiring courts to notify certain defendants of the requirements for registration; increasing the penalties for certain crimes against animals; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

**Legislative Counsel's Digest:** 

**Section 3** of this bill requires the Director of the State Department of Agriculture to select a nonprofit organization to establish and maintain a statewide animal abuser registry website. **Section 3** also: (1) sets forth the qualifications for a nonprofit organization to be selected by the Director to establish and maintain the animal abuser registry website; and (2) provides that the Director may terminate the authority of the selected nonprofit organization and select another nonprofit organization if the selected nonprofit organization fails to meet the requirements of **sections 2-7** of this bill.

**Section 2** of this bill requires a person convicted of a felony against an animal to register with the animal abuser registry website and keep his or her registration current. **Section 2** also prohibits a person who is registered with the animal abuser registry website from owning an animal, living in the same dwelling as an animal or working with an animal. **Section 2** additionally provides that a person who intentionally fails to register as required, provides false information when registering or violates the prohibition against owning an animal, living in the same





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dwelling as an animal or working with an animal is guilty of a misdemeanor. Finally, **section 2** establishes the period of registration for a person required to register with the animal abuser registry website.

**Section 4** of this bill: (1) sets forth the information a person required to register must provide; and (2) provides that such information is limited to only that information which is a public record as a result of the person's conviction. **Sections 5 and 7** of this bill provide certain prohibitions against misuse of the information on the animal abuser registry website. **Section 6** of the bill requires the nonprofit organization selected to establish and maintain the animal abuser registry website to prepare and submit reports containing certain information to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for transmittal to the Legislature.

**Section 8** of this bill: (1) adds necessary definitions for the purposes of **sections 2-7** relating to the animal abuser registry website; and (2) indicates the placement of **sections 2-7** within the Nevada Revised Statutes. **Section 10** of this bill requires a court, upon the conviction and sentencing of a defendant for a felony offense against an animal for which registration is required, to provide the defendant with notice of the requirements of registration.

Sections 9, 11 and 12 of this bill increase the penalties for certain offenses. Section 9 of this bill increases the penalty for torturing, maiming, mutilating or killing a cat or dog or any animal that is kept for companionship or pleasure from a category D felony to a category C felony, unless the act is committed in order to threaten, intimidate or terrorize a person, in which case the penalty is increased from a category C felony to a category B felony. Section 9 also increases the penalty for killing or abusing an animal that is not a cat or dog and not kept for companionship or pleasure: (1) from a misdemeanor to a category D felony for a first offense; (2) from a misdemeanor to a category C felony for a second offense; and (3) from a category C felony to a category B felony for a third or subsequent offense. (NRS 574.100) Finally, section 9 provides that a person who is subject to these increased penalties must be punished by a mandatory minimum fine of at least \$2,500 and is not eligible for probation or a suspended sentence.

**Section 11** of this bill: (1) increases the penalty for killing, maiming or disfiguring an animal belonging to another person or exposing an animal belonging to another person to a poison or noxious substance from a category D felony to a category C felony with a mandatory minimum fine of at least \$2,500; and (2) provides that a person who is convicted of such an offense is not eligible for probation or a suspended sentence. (NRS 206.150)

**Section 12** of this bill: (1) increases the penalty for harming a service animal or service animal in training from a category E felony to a category C felony and for killing a service animal or service animal in training from a category D felony to a category B felony; and (2) provides that a person who is convicted of such an offense must be punished by a mandatory minimum fine of at least \$2,500 and is not eligible for probation or a suspended sentence. (NRS 426.790)

## THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

**Section 1.** Chapter 574 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto the provisions set forth as sections 2 to 7, inclusive, of this act.

Sec. 2. 1. A person who is convicted of a felony against an animal shall register with the animal abuser registry website established and maintained pursuant to sections 2 to 7, inclusive,





of this act, and keep his or her registration current as required pursuant to this section until the expiration of the period of registration.

2. A person required to register pursuant to this section shall

register not later than 3 business days after:

(a) The date on which the person is released from incarceration or confinement for the offense; or

- (b) If the person is not sentenced to a term of imprisonment for the offense, the date on which the person was sentenced for the offense.
- 3. A person required to register pursuant to this section who changes his or her name or residence shall, not later than 3 business days after the change of name or residence, notify the animal abuser registry website of the change.
- 4. A person who is registered with the animal abuser registry website shall not:
  - (a) Own an animal;

- (b) Live in the same dwelling as an animal; or
- (c) Work with an animal.
- 5. A person who intentionally:
- (a) Fails to register as required;
- (b) Provides false information when registering; or
- (c) Violates any provision of subsection 4,
- ⇒ is guilty of a misdemeanor.
  - 6. The period of registration for a person who is required to register pursuant to this section is 10 years, beginning on the date of entry of a judgment of conviction for a felony against an animal, but not including any period for which the person is incarcerated or confined for the felony against an animal.
- Sec. 3. 1. The Director of the State Department of Agriculture shall, on behalf of the Department, select a nonprofit organization to establish and maintain an animal abuser registry website which meets the requirements of sections 4 and 5 of this act.
- 2. To be selected by the Department pursuant to subsection 1, a nonprofit organization must:
  - (a) Be bonded in the amount required by the Director.
  - (b) Have demonstrated the ability to:
- (1) Work with towns, cities and other local governmental entities on issues related to animals; and
- (2) Carry out the provisions of sections 2 to 7, inclusive, of this act.
- (c) Agree to carry out the provisions of sections 2 to 7, inclusive, of this act at no cost to the Department or this State.





- 3. If the nonprofit organization selected by the Director pursuant to this section fails to meet the requirements of sections 2 to 7, inclusive, of this act, the Director may terminate the authority of the nonprofit organization to establish and maintain an animal abuser registry website and seek another nonprofit organization to select for the establishment, if necessary, and maintenance of the animal abuser registry website.
- **Sec. 4.** 1. A nonprofit organization selected pursuant to section 3 of this act must:
- (a) Establish and maintain an animal abuser registry website which must be organized so that:
- (1) A person required to register pursuant to section 2 of this act may provide the information required in subsection 2.
- (2) The animal abuser registry website meets the requirements of section 5 of this act.
- (b) Ensure that the information contained in the animal abuser registry is, to the greatest extent practicable, accurate and current.
- 2. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 3, a person required to register pursuant to section 2 of this act must provide, upon registration:
  - (a) His or her full legal name.
  - (b) A recent photo of the person.
- (c) Each offense for which the person was convicted that resulted in the requirement to register pursuant to section 2 of this act.
- 3. Any information provided by a person pursuant to subsection 2 is a public record. The provisions of this section must not be construed to require the person to provide any information that is not a public record as a result of the person's conviction for an offense which resulted in the requirement to register pursuant to section 2 of this act.
- Sec. 5. A nonprofit organization that establishes an animal abuser registry website pursuant to section 4 of this act shall maintain the animal abuser registry in a manner that:
- 1. Allows the public to obtain information for each person in the animal abuser registry in accordance with subsection 3 of section 4 of this act.
- 2. Includes instructions on the manner in which a person may obtain a correction of information that the person contends is erroneous.
- 3. Includes a warning that the information on the animal abuser registry website may not be used unlawfully to injure, harass or commit a crime against any person named in the animal abuser registry website or in a way that violates the provisions of





subsection 1 of section 7 of this act, and that any such action may result in a civil or criminal penalty.

- 4. Does not allow the public access to information about a person in the animal abuser registry other than the information the person is required to provide pursuant to subsection 2 of section 4 of this act.
- Sec. 6. A nonprofit organization selected by the State Department of Agriculture pursuant to section 3 of this act shall, on or before January 15 of each odd-numbered year and upon approval by the Director, prepare and submit to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for transmittal to the Legislature a report concerning the animal abuser registry website. The report must include, without limitation:
- 1. The number of persons registered on the animal abuser registry website each year; and
- 2. The number of times the animal abuser registry website was viewed each year.
- Sec. 7. 1. Information obtained from the animal abuser registry website may not be used for any purpose relating to any of the following:
  - (a) Insurance, including, without limitation, health insurance.
  - (b) Loans.

- (c) Credit.
- (d) Employment.
- (e) Education, scholarships or fellowships.
- (f) Housing or accommodations.
- (g) Benefits, privileges or services provided by any business establishment.
- 2. Any person who uses information from the animal abuser registry website in violation of the provisions of subsection 3 of section 5 of this act or this section is liable in a civil action brought by or on behalf of a person injured by the violation, for damages, attorney's fees and costs incurred as a result of the violation.
- 3. The State Department of Agriculture, its officers and employees and any nonprofit organization selected by the Department pursuant to section 3 of this act to establish and maintain the animal abuser registry website and its officers, employees and volunteers are immune from criminal or civil liability for an act or omission relating to information obtained, maintained or disclosed pursuant to the provisions of sections 2 to 7, inclusive, of this act, including, without limitation, an act or omission relating to:
- (a) The accuracy of information in the animal abuser registry website; or





- (b) The disclosure of or the failure to disclose information in the animal abuser registry website.
  - **Sec. 8.** NRS 574.050 is hereby amended to read as follows:
  - 574.050 As used in NRS 574.050 to 574.200, inclusive [:], and sections 2 to 7, inclusive, of this act:
  - 1. "Animal" does not include the human race, but includes every other living creature.
  - 2. "Animal abuser registry website" means the registry website established and maintained pursuant to section 3 of this act.
  - 3. "Felony against an animal" means a felony conviction for any of the following offenses:
  - (a) A violation of NRS 206.150, 426.790, 574.060, 574.070, 574.100, 574.105, 574.107, 574.120 or 574.150; or
    - (b) An attempt to commit an offense listed in paragraph (a).
  - 4. "First responder" means a person who has successfully completed the national standard course for first responders.
  - [3.] 5. "Police animal" means an animal which is owned or used by a state or local governmental agency and which is used by a peace officer in performing his or her duties as a peace officer.
- [4.] 6. "Torture" or "cruelty" includes every act, omission or neglect, whereby unjustifiable physical pain, suffering or death is caused or permitted.
  - **Sec. 9.** NRS 574.100 is hereby amended to read as follows:
  - 574.100 1. A person shall not:
  - (a) Torture or unjustifiably maim, mutilate or kill:
- (1) An animal kept for companionship or pleasure, whether belonging to the person or to another; or
  - (2) Any cat or dog;
- (b) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (a), overdrive, overload, torture, cruelly beat or unjustifiably injure, maim, mutilate or kill an animal, whether belonging to the person or to another;
- (c) Deprive an animal of necessary sustenance, food or drink, or neglect or refuse to furnish it such sustenance or drink;
- (d) Cause, procure or allow an animal to be overdriven, overloaded, tortured, cruelly beaten, or unjustifiably injured, maimed, mutilated or killed or to be deprived of necessary food or drink;
- (e) Instigate, engage in, or in any way further an act of cruelty to any animal, or any act tending to produce such cruelty; or
- (f) Abandon an animal in circumstances other than those prohibited in NRS 574.110. The provisions of this paragraph do not apply to a feral cat that has been caught to provide vaccination, spaying or neutering and released back to the location where the feral cat was caught after providing the vaccination, spaying or





neutering. As used in this paragraph, "feral cat" means a cat that has no apparent owner or identification and appears to be unsocialized to humans and unmanageable or otherwise demonstrates characteristics normally associated with a wild or undomesticated animal.

- 2. Except as otherwise provided in subsections 3 and 4 and NRS 574.210 to 574.510, inclusive, a person shall not restrain a dog:
- (a) Using a tether, chain, tie, trolley or pulley system or other device that:
  - (1) Is less than 12 feet in length;
- (2) Fails to allow the dog to move at least 12 feet or, if the device is a pulley system, fails to allow the dog to move a total of 12 feet; or
- (3) Allows the dog to reach a fence or other object that may cause the dog to become injured or die by strangulation after jumping the fence or object or otherwise becoming entangled in the fence or object;
  - (b) Using a prong, pinch or choke collar or similar restraint; or
  - (c) For more than 14 hours during a 24-hour period.
- 3. Any pen or other outdoor enclosure that is used to maintain a dog must be appropriate for the size and breed of the dog. If any property that is used by a person to maintain a dog is of insufficient size to ensure compliance by the person with the provisions of paragraph (a) of subsection 2, the person may maintain the dog unrestrained in a pen or other outdoor enclosure that complies with the provisions of this subsection.
- 4. The provisions of subsections 2 and 3 do not apply to a dog that is:
- (a) Tethered, chained, tied, restrained or placed in a pen or enclosure by a veterinarian, as defined in NRS 574.330, during the course of the veterinarian's practice;
- (b) Being used lawfully to hunt a species of wildlife in this State during the hunting season for that species;
  - (c) Receiving training to hunt a species of wildlife in this State;
- (d) In attendance at and participating in an exhibition, show, contest or other event in which the skill, breeding or stamina of the dog is judged or examined;
- (e) Being kept in a shelter or boarding facility or temporarily in a camping area;
- (f) Temporarily being cared for as part of a rescue operation or in any other manner in conjunction with a bona fide nonprofit organization formed for animal welfare purposes;
- (g) Living on land that is directly related to an active agricultural operation, if the restraint is reasonably necessary to ensure the safety





of the dog. As used in this paragraph, "agricultural operation" means any activity that is necessary for the commercial growing and harvesting of crops or the raising of livestock or poultry; or

(h) With a person having custody or control of the dog, if the person is engaged in a temporary task or activity with the dog for

not more than 1 hour.

5. A person shall not:

- (a) Intentionally engage in horse tripping for sport, entertainment, competition or practice; or
- (b) Knowingly organize, sponsor, promote, oversee or receive money for the admission of any person to a charreada or rodeo that includes horse tripping.
- 6. A person who willfully and maliciously violates paragraph (a) of subsection 1:
- (a) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (b), is guilty of a category [D] C felony and shall be punished as provided in NRS 193.130 [.], and shall be further punished by a fine of at least \$2,500 but not more than \$10,000. A court shall not grant probation to or suspend the sentence of a person convicted pursuant to this paragraph.
- (b) If the act is committed in order to threaten, intimidate or terrorize another person, is guilty of a category [C] B felony and shall be punished [as provided in NRS 193.130.] by imprisonment in the state prison for a minimum term of not less than 1 year and a maximum term of not more than 6 years, and shall be further punished by a fine of at least \$2,500 but not more than \$20,000. A court shall not grant probation to or suspend the sentence of a person convicted pursuant to this paragraph.
- 7. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 6, a person who violates subsection 1, 2, 3 or 5:
- (a) For the first offense within the immediately preceding 7 years, is guilty of a [misdemeanor] category D felony and shall be [sentenced to:
- (1) Imprisonment in the city or county jail or detention facility for not less than 2 days, but not more than 6 months; and
- (2) Perform not less than 48 hours, but not more than 120 hours, of community service.

  The person shall be further punished by a fine of not less than
  - The person shall be further punished by a fine of not less than \$200, but not more than \$1,000. A term of imprisonment imposed pursuant to this paragraph may be served intermittently at the discretion of the judge or justice of the peace, except that each period of confinement must be not less than 4 consecutive hours and must occur either at a time when the person is not required to be at the person's place of employment or on a weekend.] punished as provided in NRS 193.130, and shall be further punished by a fine





of at least \$2,500 but not more than \$5,000. A court shall not grant probation to or suspend the sentence of a person convicted pursuant to this paragraph.

(b) For the second offense within the immediately preceding 7 years, is guilty of a [misdemeanor] category C felony and shall be [sentenced to:

(1) Imprisonment in the city or county jail or detention facility for not less than 10 days, but not more than 6 months; and

(2) Perform not less than 100 hours, but not more than 200 hours, of community service.

The person shall be further punished by a fine of not less than \$500, but not more than \$1,000.] punished as provided in NRS 193.130, and shall be further punished by a fine of at least \$2,500 but not more than \$10,000. A court shall not grant probation to or suspend the sentence of a person convicted pursuant to this paragraph.

(c) For the third and any subsequent offense within the immediately preceding 7 years, is guilty of a category [C] B felony and shall be punished [as provided in NRS 193.130.] by imprisonment in the state prison for a minimum term of not less than 1 year and a maximum term of not more than 6 years, and shall be further punished by a fine of at least \$2,500 but not more than \$20,000. A court shall not grant probation to or suspend the sentence of a person convicted pursuant to this paragraph.

8. In addition to any other fine or penalty provided in subsection 6 or 7, a court shall order a person convicted of violating subsection 1, 2, 3 or 5 to pay restitution for all costs associated with the care and impoundment of any mistreated animal under subsection 1, 2, 3 or 5 including, without limitation, money expended for veterinary treatment, feed and housing.

9. The court may order the person convicted of violating subsection 1, 2, 3 or 5 to surrender ownership or possession of the mistreated animal.

- 10. The provisions of this section do not apply with respect to an injury to or the death of an animal that occurs accidentally in the normal course of:
  - (a) Carrying out the activities of a rodeo or livestock show; or

(b) Operating a ranch.

- 11. As used in this section, "horse tripping" means the roping of the legs of or otherwise using a wire, pole, stick, rope or other object to intentionally trip or intentionally cause a horse, mule, burro, ass or other animal of the equine species to fall. The term does not include:
- (a) Tripping such an animal to provide medical or other health care for the animal; or





- (b) Catching such an animal by the legs and then releasing it as part of a horse roping event for which a permit has been issued by the local government where the event is conducted.
- **Sec. 10.** Chapter 176 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto a new section to read as follows:
- 1. If a defendant is convicted of a felony against an animal, the court shall, following the imposition of a sentence:
- (a) Inform the defendant of the requirements for registration, including, without limitation:
- (1) The duty to register with the animal abuser registry website pursuant to section 2 of this act.
- (2) If the defendant changes his or her name or residence, the duty to notify the animal abuser registry website pursuant to section 2 of this act.
- (3) The full period of registration required pursuant to section 2 of this act.
- (b) Require the defendant to read and sign a form stating that the requirements for registration have been explained and that the defendant understands the requirements for registration.
- 2. The failure to provide the defendant with the information or the confirmation form required by paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection 1 does not affect the duty of the defendant to register and to comply with all other provisions for registration pursuant to sections 2 to 7, inclusive, of this act.
- 3. As used in this section, "felony against an animal" has the meaning ascribed to it in NRS 574.050.
  - **Sec. 11.** NRS 206.150 is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 206.150 1. Except as otherwise provided in subsections 2 and 3, any person who willfully and maliciously kills, maims or disfigures any animal belonging to another, or exposes any poison or noxious substance with intent that it should be taken by the animal is guilty of a category [D] C felony and shall be punished as provided in NRS 193.130, and [may be further punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000.] shall be further punished by a fine of at least \$2,500 but not more than \$10,000. A court shall not grant probation to or suspend the sentence of a person convicted pursuant to this paragraph.
- 2. Except as otherwise provided in NRS 205.220, a person who willfully and maliciously kills an estray or one or more head of livestock, without the authority to do so, is guilty of a category C felony and shall be punished as provided in NRS 193.130.
- 3. The provisions of subsection 1 do not apply to any person who kills a dog pursuant to NRS 575.020.
  - **Sec. 12.** NRS 426.790 is hereby amended to read as follows: 426.790 1. A person shall not:





- (a) Without legal justification, interfere with, or allow a dog or other animal the person owns, harbors or controls to interfere with, the use of a service animal or service animal in training by obstructing, intimidating or otherwise jeopardizing the safety of the service animal or service animal in training or the person using the service animal or service animal in training.
- (b) Willfully and maliciously beat a service animal or service animal in training.
- (c) Willfully and maliciously kill a service animal or service animal in training.
- 2. Unless a greater penalty is provided in NRS 206.150, a person who violates:
- (a) Paragraph (a) of subsection 1 is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.
- (b) Paragraph (b) of subsection 1 is guilty of a category [E] C felony and shall be punished as provided in NRS 193.130 [...], and shall be further punished by a fine of at least \$2,500 but not more than \$10,000. A court shall not grant probation to or suspend the sentence of a person convicted pursuant to this paragraph.
- (c) Paragraph (c) of subsection 1 is guilty of a category [D] B felony and shall be punished [as provided in NRS 193.130.] by imprisonment in the state prison for a minimum term of not less than 1 year and a maximum term of not more than 6 years, and shall be further punished by a fine of at least \$2,500 but not more than \$20,000. A court shall not grant probation to or suspend the sentence of a person convicted pursuant to this paragraph.
- 3. A person who violates paragraph (a), (b) or (c) of subsection 1 is, in addition to any criminal penalty that may be imposed, civilly liable to the person against whom the violation was committed as provided in NRS 426.820.
- 4. In addition to any other penalty, the court shall order a person convicted of a violation of paragraph (a), (b) or (c) of subsection 1 to pay restitution to the person who has the disability or the person who has custody or ownership of the service animal or service animal in training for any veterinary bills, and for the replacement cost of the service animal or service animal in training if it was killed or disabled or has become mentally or physically unable to perform its duties. The restitution must cover all costs for aides, assistance, transportation and other hardships incurred during the absence, and until the replacement, of the service animal or service animal in training.
- **Sec. 13.** The provisions of subsection 1 of NRS 218D.380 do not apply to any provision of this act which adds or revises a requirement to submit a report to the Legislature.





- **Sec. 14.** 1. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 2, the amendatory provisions of this act do not apply to offenses committed before July 1, 2021.
- 2. The amendatory provisions of this act apply to offenses committed before July 1, 2021, for the purpose of determining whether a person is subject to the provisions of paragraph (b) or (c) of subsection 7 of NRS 574.100, as amended by section 9 of this act.
- **Sec. 15.** 1. This section becomes effective upon passage and approval.
  - 2. Sections 1 to 7, inclusive, of this act become effective:
- (a) Upon passage and approval for the purpose of performing any preparatory administrative tasks that are necessary to carry out the provisions of this act; and
  - (b) On July 1, 2021, for all other purposes.
- 3. Sections 8 to 14, inclusive, of this act become effective on July 1, 2021.





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