

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5205

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, February 22, 1999

Title: An act relating to animal cruelty.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to the prevention of cruelty to animals.

Sponsors: Senators Morton, Rasmussen, Stevens, T. Sheldon, Honeyford, Sellar and Swecker.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/15/99, 2/22/99
[DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5205 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; T. Sheldon, Vice Chair; Gardner, Honeyford, Morton, Prentice, Snyder and Swecker.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: Animal care and control agencies enforce this state's animal cruelty laws. Animal cruelty is punished according to the severity of the offense. First degree animal cruelty is punished as a class C felony, while animal cruelty in the second degree is punished as a misdemeanor.

Certain animal activities are exempt from the cruelty statutes. Accepted husbandry practices used in commercial livestock or poultry raising and slaughtering, the use of animals in the normal and usual course of rodeo events, and the customary use or exhibiting animals in normal and usual events at fairs are currently exempt.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The humane, normal and usual use of horses in racing activities authorized under the laws of Washington and subject to the rules of the Washington Horse Racing Commission is provided an exemption from the cruelty statutes. The humane, normal, and usual use of horses, mules and oxen for logging, training, riding, and showing is provided an exemption.

For the purpose of the section, the term "humane" is defined as the kind, merciful, or compassionate use of an animal as characterized by a reasonably prudent animal owner who would be using the animal under the same conditions.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Instead of applying to animals, the bill was narrowed to apply only to the humane, normal and usual use of horses, mules, or oxen for logging, training, riding, showing or driving.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The freedom to ride and participate in youth horse events should be protected from those who contend that the act of riding a horse is cruel.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Eddie Armstrong, Washington State Horse Council (pro); George Frick, 4H (pro); Virginia Prigge, Washington State Horsemen (pro).