



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Tedisco

## Tedisco Makes New Call to Repeal Bail Law, Increase Penalties for Animal Cruelty in Response to Man in Albany Who Lit Dog on Fire

JAMES TEDISCO March 15, 2025

| ISSUE: **ANIMAL CRUELTY, COMPANION ANIMALS, BAIL LAW; CRIMINAL JUSTICE; DISCOVERY; LAW ENFORCEMENT; CRIME VICTIMS, JUDICIAL DISCRETION**



Senator Tedisco, driving force behind passage of “Buster’s Law” for felony animal cruelty, calls for new laws to protect people and pets by giving judges discretion to hold dangerous offenders; double jail time for animal abusers, require them to have psychiatric evaluation, and create statewide registry of animal abusers to ban them from ever owning a pet again

Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C-Ballston Lake) today is urging passage of several public safety bills to protect people and pets from harm in light of a recent disturbing incident in Albany of a Bronx man starving and then allegedly lighting a dog in a crate on fire in a church parking lot.

On February 23rd, **Christopher Maxwell from the Bronx** was caught on a Ring doorbell camera allegedly setting a pit bull puppy on fire in a crate in the parking lot of Elijah Missionary Church in Albany.

Maxwell was arrested and charged under “**Buster’s Law**” with felony aggravated cruelty to animals and released with an appearance ticket because animal cruelty is no longer a bailable offense under the bail reform law passed and supported by the Governor and Legislative Majorities in the state legislature.

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*“The shocking and extremely disturbing torture and murder of a puppy who was allegedly set ablaze in Albany by this depraved individual not only highlights the need to strengthen our state’s animal cruelty laws but also is yet another example of New York’s broken so-called ‘criminal justice reform’ laws and the failed bail law that’s created a revolving door of danger and disaster. Anyone who would be so dastardly as to starve and light a defenseless puppy on fire like this would have no hesitation to harm a human and is a clear and present danger to public safety,” said Senator Jim Tedisco.*

Tedisco is sponsoring bi-partisan legislation to repeal the failed bail law ([S.4461](#)) and give judges reasonable discretion as 49 other states do.

Tedisco is the driving force behind passage of the landmark Buster’s Law creating the felony category of "aggravated cruelty to animals," punishable by up to two years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

*b*

Cruelty to animals is a bridge crime as those who hurt animals go on to harm humans. A clear example of that is the individual who poured kerosene on Buster the cat in Schenectady that inspired Senator Tedisco to get Buster's Law passed in 1999. This individual later was imprisoned for various crimes, including attempted rape, sexual abuse and unlawful imprisonment of a 12-year-old girl. The FBI has animal cruelty as a top tier Group A offense in its crime reporting statistics due to it being a bridge crime.

Tedisco is sponsoring legislation to increase penalties for violating "Buster's Law" from the current two years in jail and a \$5,000 fine to four years in prison and a \$10,000 fine (S.1205) and requiring those convicted of animal cruelty from owning or possessing a companion animal and ensure abusers receive a psychiatric evaluation (S.1044).

Senator Tedisco also is sponsoring "**Kirby & Quigley's Law**" making it an additional felony with 2 years in jail and a \$5,000 fine for harming a companion animal in the commission of another crime such as burglary (S.470).

*q*

*"These measures aren't just about protecting our pets, they're about keeping all members of our family safe from violence. Any person who would light a dog in a crate on fire would likely not hesitate to harm a human. We have an obligation as a government to protect all members of our family, including those who have no voice. Having a companion animal is not a right, it's a privilege, but our pets and people have a right to be safe from abuse and neglect," said Tedisco.*

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*"The scales of justice are now tipped in favor of criminals as crime victims and our beloved companion animals have become the forgotten New Yorkers," said Senator Tedisco.*

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## 2025-S4461

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Repeals certain provisions of the criminal procedure law, judiciary law and the executive law and makes conforming changes thereto; repealer

February 05, 2025

In Senate Committee [Codes](#)

Sponsored by [James Tedisco](#)

Do you support this bill?

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## 2025-S1205

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Increases certain penalties for violating the prohibition of animal fighting and for aggravated cruelty to animals

January 08, 2025

In Senate Committee [Agriculture](#)

Sponsored by [James Tedisco](#)

Do you support this bill?

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## 2025-S1044

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Prohibits a person convicted of violating "Buster's Law" from owning or possessing a companion animal

January 07, 2025

In Senate Committee **Agriculture**

Sponsored by **James Tedisco**

Do you support this bill?

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## 2025-S470

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Expands the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to a companion animal during the commission of a felony

December 31, 2024

In Senate Committee [Agriculture](#)

Sponsored by [James Tedisco](#)

Do you support this bill?

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