



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

Senator Lanza Announces "Ape's Law" to Increase Penalties for Killing a Police Animal

ANDREW J LANZA July 25, 2013



Senator Lanza today announced a new law that will make the killing of a police animal a felony. Specially-trained police animals, particularly dogs and horses, are often put in harm's way when they are relied upon by law enforcement to keep New Yorkers safe. The new law will hold responsible individuals who kill these animals.

Law enforcement agencies have increasingly relied on the use of animals to assist with a variety of tasks to protect New Yorkers, including crime solving as well as rescue and recovery operations. The animals' specialized abilities are the result of extensive training that requires a great deal of time and resources. The killing of a police animal is both a tragic event and a serious loss to law enforcement in their work to keep New Yorkers safe. The new law signed today by Governor Cuomo (S1079A) will make the killing of a police dog or a police horse while it is performing its duties a class E felony. It is currently a Class A misdemeanor. The new law takes effect on November 1, 2013.

In addition, the Governor today signed legislation (S1993A) that will allow police departments to waive the requirement that a police dog must be confined for 10 days after biting an individual while in the course of official duties. Under current law, dogs that had bitten individuals are detained for a 10 day observation period as a precaution to protect against any possible rabies exposure. As police dogs are a vital part of a police department's mission, the new law will allow law enforcement to receive a waiver from a local health department – based on the dog's up-to-date rabies vaccinations – to allow the dog to immediately return to its duties keeping New Yorkers safe. The new law will take effect immediately.

Senator Andrew Lanza, who cosponsored the legislation, said: "Police animals go where others will not in order to keep law enforcement officials and all New Yorkers safe from harm and it's a tragedy when one is killed. This new law will hold the guilty parties accountable and offer better protections for these highly trained animals who are important members of our law enforcement community."

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