

Background for HB 1438

Like children, animals are often powerless to escape from an abusive situation. Given their vulnerability, it should be mandatory for mental health workers to report known or suspected animal abuse, just as it is mandatory to report child abuse.



While **protecting animals is reason enough to support this bill**, it is worth noting **some other merits** of mandatory reporting:

- Individuals who abuse animals are **more likely to abuse humans**, putting family members at risk.

- **Children who witness violence against animals** are significantly more likely to inflict violence on animals in both childhood and adulthood.
- Mental health workers bound to secrecy **may suffer psychologically**, knowing an animal is being harmed but unable to report it.
- Identifying and **curtailing patterns of violence** is part of a mental health worker's job.