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## ASPCA Commends Florida Gov. DeSantis for Signing Bill to Protect Domestic Violence Survivors and their Pets

*As domestic violence cases rise during COVID-19 pandemic, new law provides relief to survivors and their pets*

TALLAHASSEE – The [ASPCA®](#) (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) commends Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis for signing [C.S./S.B. 1082](#), which will help keep people and pets together by ensuring family pets can be included in orders of protection from domestic violence. With this new law, Florida joins more than 30 other states who have enacted meaningful public policies to safeguard both humans and pets from violence in the home.

Research indicates that up to 89 percent of pet-owning women entering domestic violence shelters report that their abuser threatened, harmed, or killed a family pet. Additionally, as many as 48 percent of domestic violence survivors with pets delay seeking safety, fearing what would happen if they left their pets behind.

“Under normal circumstances, adults, children, and pets living in an abusive home often face major obstacles to escape harm’s way. Unfortunately, the necessity of staying at home to prevent the spread of COVID-19 has made this situation substantially more dangerous for both people and pets,” said **Jennifer Hobgood, senior director of state legislation for the ASPCA, Southeast Region**. “As our nation responds to this pandemic, reports of increasing rates of domestic violence have surfaced in many areas, including Florida. This lifesaving law now makes it clear that courts may include family pets in temporary restraining orders, and we thank Governor DeSantis for signing this bill to help domestic violence survivors and their pets reach safety.”

The new law, which takes effect on July 1, 2020, was championed by Sen. Ben Albritton (R-Bartow), and Reps. Sam Killebrew (R-Winter Haven) and David Silvers (D-West Palm Beach). The bill received strong support from state law enforcement agencies, including Brevard County Sheriff Wayne Ivey, who [appeared in a video](#) in support of the bill alongside his dog, Junny. Bradenton Police Chief Melanie Bevan and retired Police Chief Frank Fabrizio also joined Rep. Killebrew in [a video](#) endorsing the bill. A Mason-Dixon poll showed 83 percent support for the measure from registered Florida voters.

Recognizing that more volatile domestic situations are a threat to vulnerable people and pets, the ASPCA recently unveiled a [position statement](#), outlining the proactive steps that can be taken now to minimize the damaging impact of COVID-19 and help ensure that people and pets have a safe and secure place to call home during the crisis and long after it has passed.

For more information on the ASPCA or to join the ASPCA Advocacy Brigade, please visit [www.aspca.org](http://www.aspca.org).

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**About the ASPCA®**

Founded in 1866, the ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) is the first animal welfare organization in North America and serves as the nation's leading voice for animals. More than two million supporters strong, the ASPCA's mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States. As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, the ASPCA is a national leader in the areas of anti-cruelty, community outreach and animal health services. For more information, please visit [www.ASPCA.org](http://www.ASPCA.org), and be sure to follow the ASPCA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).