



THE FEDERATION OF SPCAs AND HUMANE SOCIETIES
FÉDÉRATION DES SOCIÉTÉS D'ASSISTANCE AUX ANIMAUX



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Breaking the Chain: Canada's New Bill Exposes the Violence Link

Ottawa, December 10, 2025 – The Government of Canada has taken a landmark step to protect vulnerable people and animals with the introduction of Bill C-16, the Protecting Victims Act. Announced by Justice Minister Sean Fraser, this legislation directly addresses the connection between violence against animals and violence against people, especially children and survivors of gender-based violence.

“When animals suffer, people suffer. The violence link is real,” says Barbara Cartwright, CEO of Humane Canada. “This bill finally recognizes that cruelty to animals is a warning sign and a weapon in the abuse of children and gender-based violence.”

Key Highlights:

- **Criminalizing Animal Sexual Abuse Images:** Bill C-16 makes it a crime to distribute images of animal sexual abuse, a form of extreme cruelty often used by perpetrators to groom, manipulate, and exploit children. The RCMP has identified online groups that coerce children into creating such images, then use them for extortion and further harm. This bill disrupts that cycle, protecting both children and animals.
- **Recognizing Animals as Victims and Tools of Coercion:** The Act acknowledges that animals are not only victims but are also used as tools of intimidation and control in cases of intimate partner violence and criminal harassment. The bill would amend section 264(2)(d) to include threats against animals in a victim's care, closing a critical gap in protection.

“Animals are family, and too often they are silent victims in coercive control, child exploitation, and gender-based violence. Recognizing this reality means finally seeing the whole family unit and taking steps to protect both animals and the people who love them,” adds Cartwright.

The Government of Canada's recognition of the violence link reflects years of persistent advocacy led by Humane Canada and its Member organizations across the country. Humane Canada has led the charge for robust protections for animals and survivors. Committed to advancing research, supporting policy innovation, and educating communities and justice systems about the violence link, Humane Canada leads the Canadian Violence Coalition and the National Centre for the Prosecution of Animal Cruelty.

For too long, outdated laws ignored the violence link. Bill C-16 is a turning point, making homes safer and sending a clear message: cruelty to any family member, human or animal, will not be tolerated.

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