



OFFICE OF SENATOR SABINA FLORES PEREZ

Chairperson

Committee on Environment, Revenue and Taxation, and Procurement

I MINA'TRENTAI SINGKO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÁHAN

35TH GUAM LEGISLATURE

PRESS RELEASE

Senator Perez Introduces Bill 49-35 to Strengthen Animal Abuse Law

Guam, February 20, 2019 – This morning, Senator Sabina Perez introduced Bill 49-35 to strengthen Guam's animal abuse law. The bill is co-authored by Senator Moylan, Senator San Agustin, and Senator Shelton.

The legislation comes in response to a February 11 court ruling dismissing all felony charges against a suspect indicted for shooting a neighbor's dog. In the ruling, the judge argued it was unclear whether the dog killed experienced prolonged suffering, and as such, felony charges do not apply.

Guam law currently stipulates a third-degree felony for anyone who "cruelly causes the death" of an animal. The judge dismissing the charges cited this section, narrowly interpreting the term "cruelly" to only encompass whether an animal suffers from prolonged pain.

"It's deeply disturbing that an individual can now trespass onto private property, shoot a family's dog, and only receive a slap on the wrist," said Senator Perez. "It was never the intent of the law to allow something like this to happen," she added.

In order to prevent similar future rulings, Bill 49-35 amends the law to apply a third-degree felony charge to anyone who "cruelly or maliciously causes the death" of an animal. With this change, all cruel or ill-intentioned killings of animals will be considered a felony. Hunting game, self-defense, and other legal exemptions will continue to exist in statute.

"The recent court ruling creates a disturbing legal precedent," said Senator Perez. "Bill 49-35 makes clear the original intent of the law, which is to protect all animals from senseless cruelty."

"I'm honored to have three excellent Senators, representing both parties, co-sponsor this legislation," said Senator Perez. "This is an important issue for the entire legislative body, and look forward to collaborating with my colleagues to adopt this legislation and protect Guam's animals," she added.

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