

# **Animal Legal Defense Fund Releases First-Ever State Animal Protection Laws Rankings**

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Every state today has laws protecting animals from cruelty and neglect; however some states have better laws than others. Following a detailed comparative analysis of the animal protection laws of each state in the country, researching over two thousand pages of statutes and tracking more than thirty different categories of provisions, the Animal Legal Defense Fund has produced a first-of-its-kind report – a ranking of all fifty states and the District of Columbia for the general comprehensiveness and relative strength of their respective animal protection laws.<sup>1</sup> This ranking groups states into top, middle and bottom tiers, and also includes a listing of the best five and worst five states.<sup>2</sup>

“Each state has room for improvement in the various ways its laws protect animals,” says Stephan Otto, Animal Legal Defense Fund’s Director of Legislative Affairs and producer of the rankings, “however, it is undeniable that some states do have stronger, more extensive laws than others. We hope this report encourages states, especially those at the lower end of the ranking, to refocus their attention on this problem and work harder at improving their laws.”

The Animal Legal Defense Fund plans to release these rankings on an annual basis. Please contact your state legislators and encourage them to support improvements to the laws that protect animals. For additional information, visit the “Resources” section at [aldf.org](http://aldf.org).

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<sup>1</sup> Based on statutes enacted through 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Within each category, states are listed in alphabetical order.



**2006 STATE ANIMAL PROTECTION LAWS RANKINGS**  
*Comparing Overall Strength & Comprehensiveness*

<b>BEST FIVE</b>	California, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Oregon
<b>WORST FIVE</b>	Hawaii, Idaho, Kentucky, North Dakota, Utah

<b>TOP TIER</b>	California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Vermont, Virginia
<b>MIDDLE TIER</b>	Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee
<b>BOTTOM TIER</b>	Alaska, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Wyoming

## Overview: Why These States Made the “Worst Five” List

<b>Hawaii</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No felony animal cruelty provision</li> <li>- Inadequate range of prohibitions and definitions/standards of basic care</li> <li>- No mental health evaluations or counseling on conviction</li> <li>- No cost mitigation provisions for impounded animals (e.g. cost-of-care bonds, other reimbursement of costs, restitution or lien provisions)</li> <li>- Inadequate provisions for forfeiture of abused animals</li> <li>- No restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals following a conviction</li> <li>- No separate crime for the sexual assault of an animal</li> </ul>
<b>Idaho</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No felony animal cruelty provision</li> <li>- Inadequate definitions/standards of basic care</li> <li>- No mental health evaluations or counseling on conviction</li> <li>- Inadequate cost mitigation provisions for impounded animals (e.g. cost-of-care bonds, reimbursement of costs, restitution)</li> <li>- No forfeiture of abused animals</li> <li>- No restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals following a conviction</li> </ul>
<b>Kentucky</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inadequate range of prohibitions and definitions/standards of basic care</li> <li>- Principal protections apply only to select types of animals</li> <li>- Felony provision available only for select repeat offenses involving only select animals</li> <li>- No mental health evaluations or counseling following a conviction</li> <li>- No cost mitigation provisions for impounded animals (e.g. cost-of-care bonds, other reimbursement of costs, restitution provisions)</li> <li>- No forfeiture of abused animals</li> <li>- No restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals following a conviction</li> <li>- No separate crime for the sexual assault of an animal</li> </ul>
<b>North Dakota</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No felony animal cruelty provision</li> <li>- Inadequate definitions/standards of basic care</li> <li>- No mental health evaluations or counseling on conviction</li> <li>- Inadequate cost mitigation provisions for impounded animals (e.g. cost-of-care bonds, other reimbursement of costs, restitution provisions)</li> <li>- No forfeiture of abused animals</li> <li>- No restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals following a conviction</li> <li>- No humane agents</li> </ul>
<b>Utah</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No felony animal cruelty provision</li> <li>- Inadequate definitions/standards of basic care</li> <li>- Principal protections apply only to select types of animals</li> <li>- No mental health evaluations</li> <li>- Inadequate cost mitigation provisions for impounded animals (e.g. cost-of-care bonds, other reimbursement of costs, restitution provisions)</li> <li>- No forfeiture of abused animals</li> <li>- No restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals following a conviction</li> <li>- No humane agents</li> </ul>