

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 559 — Animal Welfare

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Reps. Chaney, López, J., and others (CS/SB 676 by Fiscal Policy Committee and Senators Arrington and Leek)

The bill creates new third degree felony offenses if a person eighteen years of age or older causes or entices a minor to commit, or in the presence of a minor, commits:

- Aggravated animal cruelty;
- Fighting or baiting animals; or
- Sexual activities involving animals.

The bill amends the Offense Severity Ranking Chart to rank new offenses created by the bill and increase the ranking for the offense of fighting or baiting animals.

A juvenile court must order a minor who commits an animal cruelty offense to undergo a psychological evaluation and, if recommended, receive counseling or treatment for a length of time as prescribed by the juvenile court. The minor's parent or guardian, or the state if the minor is a ward of the state, must pay the cost of such evaluation, counseling, or treatment. If the juvenile court makes a finding of indigency and significant financial hardship, it must waive the fee or reduce it to an amount deemed appropriate. If the minor's parent or guardian willfully refuses to follow the recommended treatment for the minor, the juvenile court may hold the parent or guardian in contempt.

Additionally, the bill updates requirements related to the animal abuse database maintained by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to:

- Specify information that must include an offender's name, all aliases, date of birth, race, county of conviction, charge or charges, case number, disposition, description of any identifying marks and tattoos, and a photograph taken at the time of booking of each individual who has been convicted of, or who has entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to, regardless of adjudication, an offense of animal cruelty.
- Require each clerk of court and county detention facility to provide such information to the FDLE.
- Require the FDLE to post such information for:
 - Three years from the date of conviction, for a first misdemeanor conviction;
 - Five years from the date of conviction, for a first felony conviction; and
 - Ten years from the date of conviction, for any subsequent conviction.
- Provide a process to allow a person whose conviction has been overturned or who has received a sealing of the criminal history record for which his or her information was publicly posted to petition for the removal of his or her information.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on October 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

This summary is provided for information only and does not represent the opinion of any Senator, Senate Officer, or Senate Office.
--

This summary is provided for information only and does not represent the opinion of any Senator, Senate Officer, or Senate Office.