

Kill Bill S203 – Canada needs effective animal cruelty legislation

PRESS RELEASE

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Unless they can be convinced otherwise, Members of Parliament will in the next few weeks, amend Canada's pathetically weak federal animal cruelty legislation with a new law that is shamefully just as toothless. Animals will continue to suffer because of the poor ethics of our leaders.

Stop Animal Cruelty in Canada with Bill C-373, a network of Canada wide animal groups and individuals, is calling on Canadians to take immediate action (contact their MP, and/or participate in one of several rallies being planned across the country for March 30) to convince Parliamentarians to defeat Bill S-203 when it returns to the House of Commons for a final vote.

Time is running out to let Members of Parliament know that Bill S-203 does not go far enough to stop animal cruelty. A free vote (meaning MP's are not bound by their party) is being held in the House of Commons in a few weeks. To date, the Conservatives, the Liberals and the Bloc have backed this useless Bill.

Every animal welfare protection group in Canada including Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS), Inter. Federation of Animal Welfare (IFAW), Canadian Veterinarian Medical Assoc (CVMA), Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), World Society for the Protection of animals (WSPA), and more than 145,000 Canadians who signed Bill C-373 Petitions, have campaigned to squash S-203.

Currently, less than ¼ of 1% of animal abuse complaints lead to successful convictions.

Bill S-203's shortcomings:

- * it only covers animals that are "property", therefore, "unowned" animals, such as strays and wildlife will not be protected. Animal cruelty provisions should protect all animals, not just "those kept for a lawful purpose"
- * it does not include a clear and concise definition of "animal"
- * it does not criminalize individuals who train or organize animals to fight other animals or those who bet on animal fights
- * it does not make it an offence to kill an animal with brutal and/or vicious intent, whether or not the animal dies immediately
- * it makes it virtually impossible to prosecute cases of neglect

Animal groups Canada wide, feel that Bill S-203 would create an illusion that strong action has been taken, when it has not. Animal abuse and cruelty will continue to go unpunished!

Please write a letter to your MP and attend a rally to:
let the Govt know that S-203 is not acceptable and ask for support of effective animal
cruelty legislation before it's too late for animals in Canada!

Information about rallies is available on the following Stop Animal Cruelty in Canada
with Bill C-373 websites:

Facebook group <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2559701041>

Homepage <http://groups.msn.com/StopAnimalCrueltyBillC373>

The group points to an alternative bill, C-373, introduced as a private member's bill by
MP Mark Holland (L-Ajax-Pickering) as containing far more satisfactory amendments. It
sits far down the order paper and without the government picking it up, it is unlikely to
advance beyond first reading.

These sites also include a link to a sample letter to MPs. To find out who represents a
particular riding, individuals may consult http://canada.gc.ca/directories/direct_e.html

Further Information:

IFAW released a report (available at
<http://www.ifaw.org/ifaw/general/default.aspx?oid=225657> placing Canada in last place
on animal cruelty legislation when compared to 13 other countries.

CFHS

<http://cfhs.ca/>

Bill Amendments at a glance:

http://ontariospca.ca/press_releases/2006/images/CFHS_backgrounder.pdf

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Stop Animal Cruelty in Canada with Bill C-373 *-a network of Canadians supporting
effective animal cruelty legislation*