

ANDRÉ JACQUE

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TO: Members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

FROM: Rep. André Jacque

DATE: January 25, 2018

RE: Assembly Bill 666

Chairman Spiros and Colleagues on the Assembly Criminal Justice Committee:

Thank you for holding this hearing on Assembly Bill 666. I am very pleased to bring forward this common sense bi-partisan legislation with Sen. Risser to more effectively address the crime of sexual contact with an animal by increasing the penalty to a felony and increasing penalties for repeat offenses, and making a technical change to the definition of sexual contact with an animal to prohibit perpetrators from using any body part or object on an animal for sexual gratification, not just their sex organ, closing a loophole that has unfortunately been exploited. These changes were drafted in consultation with and at the request of district attorneys, law enforcement agencies, farmers, and animal advocates.

A study of 44,000 adult sex offenders found that prior sexual abuse of animals is the number one behavioral predictor for sexual abuse of a child, and individuals who sexually abuse animals are very frequently violent, predatory sex offenders who share many common traits with pedophiles. The bill's proposed felony penalty would appropriately prohibit the abuser from participating in certain state licensed programs such as the child foster network, operating a child care service, and driving a school bus. Sexual abuse of animals is currently a felony in twenty three states.

I am pleased to note that the Wisconsin State Horse Council and the Humane Society of the US support this legislation. Thank you for your consideration.



Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies, Inc. 5132 Vogus Road Madison, WI 53718



Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies (WFHS) has been serving Wisconsin pets and its human population since 1927. We are one of the oldest and continuously operating animal welfare organization in the world. Our members, Board of Directors, sponsors and supporters are 100% in favor of AB 666. It is shocking that in the 21st Century, with all the progress we have made as a culture, that this measure is just now being considered. During our history, the sexual abuse of animals has been witnessed many times. **This is not a "rare" or "isolated" occurrence.**

In order to make this measure truly effective and offer protection to animals killed or abused in sexual acts, we respectfully request that the following provisions be included:



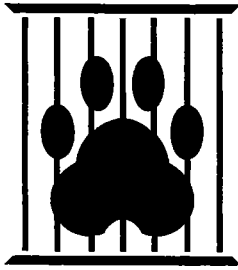
SUGGESTED AMMENDMENTS

1. Empower law enforcement officers to remove an animal from a property or domicile where its sexual abuse is suspected. The animal should be held at humane society, animal shelter or rescue organization and be provided with necessary care including veterinary services. The costs of the care should be charged to the convicted offender.
2. Include in the language of the bill that any person who engages in the filming, distribution, purchase or viewing of pornography including bestiality or the death of an animal be subject to felony charges as defined in the law.
3. Require that a person convicted of the sexual abuse of the animal pay for veterinary care rendered to the victim animal and require that the abuser pay the costs of that care as part of their court order.

Respectfully submitted,

Eilene Ribbens - Legislative Liaison

January 25, 2018



WISCONSIN PUPPY MILL PROJECT, INC

424 North Avenue Sheboygan, WI 53083

January 25, 2018

AB 666

Public Hearing

To The Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

The Wisconsin Puppy Mill Project thanks the authors, co-sponsors and members of this committee for considering AB 666.

It would be convenient to believe that the sexual abuse of animals is a rare occurrence. This is extremely abhorrent behavior that the vast majority of us would prefer to believe simply does not happen. That is not the case. Dealing with this issue through the law—and putting it in the category where it belongs—A FELONY CRIME—is long overdue.

Through our years of work with animals and the humane community, we can assure you that it happens often. There is a massive network of abusers who use this form of egregious animal abuse for their own pleasure, to control family members, to film, distribute and profit from participation in these cruel and unnatural acts.

We believe that the proposed legislation could be strengthened by the following:

- Felony charges against any person who films, distributes, or views sexual acts performed on animals and / or acts causing the death of an animal (sometimes referred to as “crush” videos).
- Empower law enforcement officers to remove a animal suspected of sexual abuse animal from the custody of its owner pending criminal charges and court actions.
- Require convicted offenders to pay for the costs of care of the abuse animal including veterinary care and the costs of housing, feeding and rehabilitating the animal.

We could write pages of stories of the first hand experience we have witnessed—but these are dark and painful memories. In most past cases, the abuser walked away from the crime with few, if any, consequences, usually empowered to continue the abuse.

This should not happen in Wisconsin—and today—you have the authority and power to improve the lives of animals and those of us who care for them.

We ask that you support AB666.

Sincerely,

Deb Lewis—President

Strengthen Wisconsin's Law on Animal Sexual Abuse!

What is animal sexual abuse?

It is the sexual molestation of an animal by a human. Animal sexual abuse, like rape, is the eroticization of violence, control and exploitation.

Why does it matter?

Animal sexual abuse is the single strongest predictor of increased risk for committing child sexual abuse.

In a study of over 44,000 adult male sex offenders, researchers concluded that animal sexual abuse is the number one risk factor and the strongest predictor of increased risk for sexual abuse of a child.

Some studies have found high rates of sexual assault of animals in the backgrounds of serial sexual homicide perpetrators. This is one reason why bestiality and other forms of animal cruelty are now tracked by the FBI as a Group A offense in the National Incident Based Reporting System, in the same category as rape and murder.

Isn't it already illegal?

Wisconsin Chapter 994, Crimes Against Sexual Morality, makes it a crime for anyone to commit an act of sexual gratification using his or her sex organ, mouth, or anus and the sex organ, mouth, or anus of an animal. Only prohibiting contact with a sex organ is a major loophole in the law that has caused convictions to be overturned on appeal.

In addition, Wisconsin's animal cruelty law only applies in cases where there is provable physical injury to the animal. Many acts of animal sexual abuse are filmed and discovered well after the incident occurs, so the requisite animal or medical evidence to substantiate physical injury cannot be recovered.

Finally, animals, like women and children, are trafficked, sold, and traded for sex and frequently used in the pornography industry. Trafficking animals for sex is not currently prohibited in Wisconsin.

Establishing animal sexual abuse as a separate crime allows law enforcement to identify potentially dangerous sexual predators in their community.

AB 666:

- Prohibits engaging in sexual contact with animals with any part of the body or an object;
- Prohibits promoting, trafficking, advertising, or soliciting animals for sex;
- Prohibits engaging in sexual contact with animals in the presence of a minor or coercing others;
- Increases the penalty from misdemeanor to a felony;
- Requires the court to order the convicted person to refrain from contact with animals and surrender any animals in their possession;
- Requires psychological assessment;
- Exempts veterinary procedures, accepted animal husbandry and animal care, artificial insemination, and conformation judging.



NATIONAL LINK COALITION
*Working together to stop violence
against people and animals*





The power of compassion.

January 25, 2018

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing from the Wisconsin Humane Society (WHS), the state's oldest and largest animal welfare organization that serves people and animals in Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Brown, and Door Counties. WHS supports AB 666, which strengthens protections against bestiality. This is an issue that is uncomfortable and not often talked about, but is important to address for the health of our communities; research finds strong links between sexual abuse of animals and abuse toward humans, especially sexual abuse of children and domestic violence. In fact, animal abuse is the strongest predictor of risk for committing child sexual abuse.

Wisconsin's current law hasn't been updated for decades, and AB 666 brings the law up to date and closes loopholes.

Please vote AB 666 out of committee today.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jill Kline
Wisconsin Humane Society

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Animal Welfare Institute

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23 January 2018

Honorable Jim Ott
Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Rep. Ott:

The Animal Welfare Institute strongly supports AB 666, which will strengthen Wisconsin's law against animal sexual assault. Wisconsin is to be credited for having had a law on the books but given what is known now about this crime—in particular, the fact that animal sexual abuse is the single strongest predictor of increased risk for committing child sexual abuse—the time is right for closing loopholes and increasing penalties, as AB 666 will do.

There are some who contend that animal sexual assault is not a “violent” crime. Nothing could be further from the truth. Not only is it abhorrent and cruel, often resulting in serious injury to or the death of the animal; it is also a red flag for the likelihood of violence against individuals. In fact, the term “animal sexual assault” has replaced the old term “bestiality” because of its resemblance to human sexual assault in that it involves pain, coercion, and lack of consent. Moreover, offenders have more in common with pedophiles and rapists than with animal abusers, and there is a strong relationship with interpersonal violence. With regard to the latter, research has found some very disturbing trends, including:

- Children who engage in animal sexual assault were found to be more likely to commit crimes of interpersonal violence. In fact, animal sexual assault experienced in childhood was found to be the single strongest risk factor for future involvement in child sexual abuse.
- 37 percent of sexually violent juvenile offenders had sexually abused animals.
- 95 percent of juveniles who had reported engaging in animal sexual assault had also sexually assaulted individuals.
- In one jurisdiction in Virginia, of ten adult males convicted of crimes related to bestiality, eight had also been involved in crimes involving children (e.g., child pornography, soliciting sex from a minor).

Recognizing this, the FBI includes animal sexual abuse among the offenses (the others being simple/gross neglect; intentional abuse and torture; and organized abuse) that are now to be reported under the new separate Uniform Crime Report category of animal cruelty crimes. Animal cruelty has been classified as a Group A offense, joining other major crimes such as arson, assault, and homicide, and will require the reporting of both incidents and arrests.

Animal sexual assault is not the rare, isolated perversion people like to think it is. The internet both facilitates this crime and permits it to flourish by allowing and encouraging perpetrators to communicate with and seek out one another, find animals for sexual purposes, and share their encounters.

Passage of AB 666 will add immeasurably to Wisconsin's ability to protect both animals and its communities from sexually violent offenders, and we hope that your committee, and the full legislature, will act on it swiftly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Blaney".

Nancy Blaney
Director, Government Affairs
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January 23, 2018

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Re: Animal Legal Defense Fund's Support of AB 666

Dear Representative Spiros:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a letter in support of AB 666, "an Act relating to sexual contact with an animal and providing a criminal penalty." This bill addresses a significant issue facing animals in Wisconsin—the law's current failure to adequately protect them from sexual abuse by humans.

By way of introduction, I am an attorney for the Criminal Justice Program at the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF). Founded in 1979, ALDF is a national nonprofit organization of attorneys dedicated to protecting the lives and advancing the interests of animals through the legal system. Through our Criminal Justice Program, ALDF provides free training and legal support to prosecutors and law enforcement handling animal abuse and neglect cases throughout the country, including Wisconsin.

In our work opposing animal cruelty, we too often hear of cases where animals have been subject to sexualized abuse, including the very sort of assaults this bill would prohibit. We know that the sexual abuse of an animal can take many different forms, and be driven by any number of different motives—ranging from sexual gratification to financial gain. These assaults result in a variety of harms to the animal victim, including psychological trauma, physical injury, and death.

Winning the case against cruelty

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Our work also makes us aware of a growing body of data on bestiality, indicating that sexual abuse and exploitation of animals endangers both animals and humans. As with other forms of animal abuse, bestiality overlaps significantly with violence perpetrated against humans, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. Therefore enabling the law to effectively intervene on behalf of animal victims of bestiality benefits human victims as well, and may in fact prevent future crimes against humans.

Unfortunately, despite the dangers posed by bestiality both to animals and humans, Wisconsin's current law does not adequately address these concerns. The current law narrowly defines sexual assault of an animal, omitting a number of different motivations and methods of assault. Assembly Bill 666 would not only expand this definition, but would also provide increased penalties for assaults that occur in the presence of a minor. Finally, this bill would prevent future violations by prohibiting the perpetrator from owning animals, and by requiring psychological evaluation and counseling for those convicted of bestiality.

We applaud your efforts to strengthen Wisconsin's law by closing the legal gap that fails to adequately address sexual assault of animals. In this you have our full support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen Wood".

Kathleen Wood, Esq.
Criminal Justice Fellow
Animal Legal Defense Fund
kmwood@aldf.org

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lora Dunn".

Lora Dunn, Esq.
Criminal Justice Program Director
Animal Legal Defense Fund
ldunn@aldf.org

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NATIONAL LINK COALITION

*Working together to stop violence
against people and animals*

The National Resource Center on the Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence
37 Hillside Road, Stratford, NJ 08084 • 856-627-5118 • www.NationalLinkCoalition.org •
arkowpets@snip.net

Jan. 22, 2018

To members of the Wisconsin State Legislature:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a letter of support for **AB 666**. The National LINK Coalition – the National Resource Center on The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence – and our 3,400 members in 50 states and 53 countries, including 40 members in Wisconsin, encourage your passage of this measure.

AB 666 would join Wisconsin with 23 states now consider bestiality or animal sexual abuse a felony. The Links between animal sexual abuse and child pornography are so strong that at least 27 states now require offenders to be placed on sex offenders' registries.

While sex with animals is sometimes considered a humorous or titillating issue, or a common rite of passage among rural populations, the reality in contemporary society is far more serious. A growing body of academic literature, research by criminologists and law enforcement officials, and anecdotal reports confirm this:

- Detective Jeremy Hoffman, of the Fairfax County, Va. Sheriff's Office, has called animal sexual assault "the single greatest predictor of people who will molest children." Hoffman has reported that the vast majority of child pornography cases also revealed bestiality porn as well. Hoffman found that proactively investigating animal sexual abuse led to a lot of early success in revealing child sexual abuse.
- The FBI considers animal sexual abuse such a significant issue that when it modified the National Incident-Based Reporting System to include, for the first time, reported incidents of animal abuse that will enter the national crime data base, animal sexual abuse was one of the four specific crimes added to the system.

- Forensic veterinarian Martha Smith-Blackmore has reported that the single most prevalent lesson she said she learned in her practice is that animal sexual abuse is always tied to other forms of abuse.
- In Arizona, former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio was so appalled at a case in which a local elected official was acquitted after allegedly raping a lamb that he successfully pushed for a bestiality law in the state code. In the 10 subsequent years, Arpaio arrested 10 individuals on bestiality charges with a 100% conviction rate.
- The passage of a similar bill in New Hampshire in 2016 was jeopardized by agricultural and veterinary interests who were concerned that standard operating practices with farm animals might inadvertently be misconstrued as bestiality and innocent people would be labeled as sex offenders. Most state laws exempt conduct that is generally accepted as otherwise lawful animal husbandry and veterinary practice, thereby easing those interests' concerns.

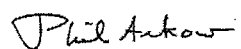
The National Link Coalition's case files include numerous cases where animal sexual abuse is linked to other crimes. Some recent examples include:

- 2016: Police in Henrico, Va., serving a warrant on man wanted in Pennsylvania on charges of child rape and child pornography, wound up charging his roommate with bestiality and animal cruelty after they allegedly found multiple images of the roommate having sex with Rottweiler dogs.
- 2016: A former Canadian TV star and his wife were charged with 26 counts of possessing pornography, sexual assault and bestiality following a months-long investigation in which thousands of images and videos were discovered on computers, hard drives and phones. Investigators believe the man and another woman engaged in sexual acts with children, between 2000 and 2006, which were posted online. They were said to have used such online screen names as "retrodeviant" and "dirty slave doll".
- 2016: A Long Island, N.Y. man who served as a foster parent of 140 children over two decades was indicted for alleged bestiality and the sexual abuse of seven boys, endangering the welfare of children who were reported to have rummaged through garbage for food. Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu faces 16 charges of sexual misconduct and endangering the welfare of the boys and one charge of sexual misconduct with a dog.
- 2015: A Geneva, Ala. man who reportedly wanted to get back at his wife because he felt she cared more about her dog than him was charged with animal cruelty for allegedly having sex with the dog. Law enforcement officers told WTVY-TV the case was one of the most disturbing that they have ever investigated. "We've dealt with hungry dogs, abandoned dogs, but never with a dog that was sexually abused. Speaking to her and him, he was upset because she paid more attention to the dog than him, and this was her baby," said Geneva Police Lt. Ricky Morgan. "His way of causing her the pain was to mess with the dog."

While bestiality is a topic that is difficult to address, it is a crime with far-reaching implications – not just for the animals but for the families who own animals that have been raped; the veterinarians who must treat the ones who are injured or die; for the detectives who must view tragic and obscene videos and seek clues to the identity of a perpetrator; for the prosecutor who must uphold the law; and for Wisconsin citizens who desire a safe and civil society.

We applaud your efforts to address this issue and offer our full support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Phil Arkow".

Phil Arkow, Coordinator
The National LINK Coalition – the National Resource Center
on the Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 666
Presented to the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
by Melissa Tedrowe, Wisconsin State Director
The Humane Society of the United States
January 25, 2018**

Chairman Spiros, Vice-Chair Kremer, and fellow Committee Members:

On behalf of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the nation's largest animal protection organization, and our Wisconsin supporters and members, I thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of Assembly Bill 666.

I recognize that this bill raises an uncomfortable subject that decent people don't like to discuss, and humor is often employed to deflect from conversation. But the matter before us today is no joke. Animal sexual abuse is a serious crime, often perpetrated by repeat offenders who extend their criminal activity to human beings.

Here in Wisconsin an individual by the name of Sterling Rachwal has put a notorious face to animal sexual abuse for more than three decades; he's a recidivist in every sense of the word. It's because of Rachwal's repeated crimes that the Wisconsin public and many members of our state law enforcement have become aware of animal sexual abuse and the inability of our current law to adequately respond.

But the bill before us today is not about one individual; what we know is that thousands of people nationwide, including right here in Wisconsin, solicit or offer animals for sex every year. Judging by ads posted on Craigslist and the "roll calls" on websites, sexual abuse of animals is happening in every area of our state, both urban and rural. On one popular bestiality forum, the most recent Wisconsin "roll call" — which is a thread asking people where they are located in the state — has 117 replies and has been viewed more than 7500 times. The most recent post was on January 22, 2018.

We also know that animal sexual abuse is linked to human crime and cruelty. Extensive case history shows that bestiality has strong ties to pedophilia; in fact, researchers suggest that bestiality is the single largest risk factor and strongest predictor of increased risk for committing child sexual abuse.

The FBI has found high rates of sexual assault of animals in the backgrounds of serial sexual homicide predators, which is why bestiality and other forms of animal cruelty are now tracked by the FBI as a Group A offense in the National Incident Based Reporting System, the same category as rape and murder.

The Wisconsin legislature decided decades ago to prohibit the sexual abuse of animals. As times have changed, the language addressing animal sexual abuse in our current law, Ch. 944, has become

outdated and is no longer sufficient to prosecute the variety of crimes related to the sexual abuse of animals. This has caused cases to be dismissed, overturned on appeal, or not able to be charged at all.

The most recent case involving serial offender Sterling Rachwal highlights the deficiencies in current law: for violent sexual assault of a family's horse, Rachwal received just two years' probation and an order to have no contact with properties where horses are kept, along with a \$105 fine. This amounts to little more than a slap, and nothing that will prevent him from harming again.

Sterling Rachwal was able to be prosecuted for this most recent assault because he was caught in the act. In other situations, current law would only apply if a veterinarian could attest that the animal sustained physical harm and it could be proven the injury was the result of the sexual assault. Many acts of animal sexual abuse are filmed and discovered well after the incident occurs — often during an investigation of human sex crimes, so the requisite animal or medical evidence to substantiate physical injury cannot be recovered.

To summarize, deficiencies in Wisconsin's current law include:

- A person can only be prosecuted if they use their sex organ to commit the act;
- It does not require psychological assessment or treatment;
- It does not prohibit the offender from owning or having contact with other animals;
- It does not allow for the seizure of victimized animals if the abuser is the owner or has custody of the animal, or any other protocols outlined for other forms of animal cruelty;
- It does not prohibit trafficking or trading animals for sex. Increasingly, the Internet facilitates this crime and allows it to flourish. Perpetrators use various websites to seek out one another where they trade, rent, and sell animals for sexual purposes. Even on common websites like Craigslist, we have found multiple ads from people in Wisconsin seeking or offering animals such as dogs, horses, calves, and other livestock for sexual purposes.

The bill before you would provide a much-needed correction to each one of those deficiencies.

In addition, A.B. 666 would increase the penalty for animal sexual abuse to a felony, a provision we strongly support -- not simply for the punishment, but because a felony conviction will prevent a sex offender from being employed in certain state licensed programs such as being a foster parent, operating a daycare, or driving a school bus -- all contexts involving unsupervised access to children. Because many animal sexual abusers tend to be lifelong offenders and seek out opportunities to be close to animals, a felony charge also gives employers such as boarding kennels, animal shelters, and veterinarians the ability to prevent potentially dangerous predators from gaining employment in their business.

The language of this bill was informed by the experience and frustrations of prosecutors and law enforcement here in Wisconsin and nationwide. HSUS experts who specialize in the sexual abuse of animals are confident that A.B. 666 will correct all of the important elements that are missing from current law and help keep animals and people safe. Importantly, we'd like the committee to note that A.B. 666 explicitly exempts practices related to veterinary care, artificial insemination, animal husbandry, animal care, and confirmation judging.

For the reasons outlined above, I ask you to support A.B. 666 and urge your colleagues on the Senate side to move swiftly on a companion bill. Thank you.

Why does a convicted horse abuser keep getting released?

by Robert Hornacek
Tuesday, May 16th 2017

GREEN BAY, Wis. (WLUK) -- Sterling Rachwal is facing three misdemeanor charges in Brown County for an incident in the Town of Eaton.

Jackie Miller says she received a late-night call in February from the owner of the barn where she keeps her horse Gringo.

"He noticed that my stall was open when he turned the lights on and then he saw somebody run out of my horse's stall," Miller said.

Miller says she rushed to the barn.

"I did a 360 (degree) check on him and that's when I found out that he was bleeding from his rectum. Right when I said that the barn owner was like alright, I'm calling the police," Miller said.

It didn't take long for police to identify a suspect.

"He was always on our radar," said Brown County Sheriff John Gossage.

Goddage says Rachwal's past is well known. That past includes several convictions related to the abuse of horses.

"It's the same kind of charge, basically, over and over again throughout the years going back to the '80s," assistant Brown County district attorney Dana Johnson said at a court hearing earlier this month.

Johnson outlined Rachwal's past, which he says includes convictions for mistreatment of animals in 1983 and 1984 in Waupaca County and in Outagamie County in 1988.

In 1993 in Monroe County and 1996 in Waupaca County, Rachwal was convicted of mistreatment of animals -- specifically horses -- but in both cases he was then found not guilty due to mental disease or defect.

FOX 11 Investigates reviewed Rachwal's case file in Waupaca County.

According to the transcript of hearing in 2007, a psychologist told the court Rachwal had been diagnosed with "...zoophilia..." specifically, "...sexual attraction to horses."

On May 13, 1997, Rachwal was committed to a mental institution for "18 years and 8 months..."

We wanted to talk with the Department of Health Services about Rachwal's case but in an email, a spokesperson said the agency is not allowed to comment because, "Persons treated at our facilities are technically patients, and are therefore protected under patient privacy laws..."

FOX 11 searched the court records and found that on Feb. 7, 2008, after serving more than 12 years, Rachwal was released.

Less than two years later, a judge ruled he violated the terms of his release when he was found in a Fond du Lac County barn with a horse.

On February 25, 2010, Rachwal was sent back to a mental health facility to finish his commitment.

That commitment ended on April 21, 2015. In a letter to the judge before Rachwal's release, the Department of Health Services noted that Rachwal was "...not interested in counseling or other community based resources..." at that time. The letter says staff did not feel Rachwal should be kept in an institution.

The letter from the state says after his release, Rachwal would serve a 90-day jail sentence for disorderly conduct in Fond du Lac County for that incident in the barn.

Two years later, Rachwal finds himself in the Brown County jail, once again accused of mistreatment of a horse.

FOX 11 Investigates sat down with Dr. Brian Cagle, a psychologist with Bellin Health, to get some insights into Rachwal's behavior.

"In my experience working with perpetrators, there really isn't a cure," Cagle said.

Cagle could not speak about Rachwal in particular, but he says in general, it's difficult to get people to stop this type of behavior.

"In my experience really the only deterrent, really, is fear of consequences and if the fear isn't strong enough, nothing is really going to stop them," Cagle said.

In the Brown County case, Rachwal is facing three misdemeanor charges. According to the criminal complaint in the case, Rachwal denies the allegations that he assaulted a horse.

Brown County district attorney David Lasee says in order for mistreatment of animals to be a felony, the conduct must lead to the mutilation, disfigurement or death of an animal.

"We racked our brain and searched through the statutes to locate what he could potentially be charged with. The reason he's charged with misdemeanors because that's all that we found that fits," Lasee said.

Horse owners like Cindy Waters of Green Bay aren't happy with the current laws.

"We're kind of like the voice for the horses. You know, they can't speak so we're going to do it for them. We just want to get stricter laws out there," Waters said.

"These laws are very antiquated," said Leighann Lassiter, director of animal cruelty policy with The Humane Society of the United States.

“These sexual abuse laws really need to cover all of the things, really horrible things that people find to do to animals,” Lassiter said.

Sheriff Gossage agrees.

“We really need to get some language in there that any type of lewd and lascivious conduct with any type of animal and get that to a legislator to try to get that law changed,” Gossage said.

State Rep. Andre Jacque, R-De Pere, says he has already been working with prosecutors to update the animal cruelty laws.

“What I’m going to be doing is getting in drafting instructions for legislation that I’d like to have introduced before this fall, hopefully get done this session, that is going to tighten up our laws in this area, increase penalties,” Jacque said.

That can’t happen soon enough for some.

“We need to see that action like yesterday. It should have been done a long time ago,” Water said.

When asked if she expects the laws to change, Miller replied, “I’m hoping so but I’m not really expecting a lot to change.”

According to the criminal complaint in the Brown County case, Rachwal is also a suspect in a case of horse abuse in Manitowoc County in April. In the complaint, Brown County investigators say during their investigation of Rachwal, they captured him on video allegedly abusing a horse just across the county line in Manitowoc County.

At this point, no charges have been filed in Manitowoc.

FOX 11 contacted Rachwal’s attorney for comment but so far we have not heard back.

January 25, 2018

RE: 2017 ASSEMBLY BILL 666

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY:

My name is Lynda Lambert and I am a constituent who resides in your district.

I have owned horses for many years, and I know that there are countless people like me who want to do more to look out for the safety and well-being of all horses, and that's why I support AB666.

When the science of behavioral profiling began to emerge in the 1970's, one of the most consistent findings reported by the FBI profiling unit was that acts of torture and cruelty towards animals, including sexual acts, evolved to acts of violence towards people, including murder. We aren't just worried for our horses, we are also worried about the safety and well-being of our children, ourselves, and our community as a whole. We must be willing to look at the bigger picture, and at what we already know to be a predictor of what is to come if we don't take action now. We deserve to live in our communities without the fear that Sterling Rachwal, and others like him, can walk the same streets as that of our families and friends, as well as our horses, after committing such unspeakable acts.

After learning more about the harmful and even deadly impact that these acts of molestation and torture have had on so many horses, I feel it's necessary to be reminded of the depth of intelligence that horses have. You may or may not have heard of a man by the name of Karl Krall. In 1908, he trained horses to communicate. The horses raised by Krall could demonstrate an apparent ability to read and do arithmetic. One of the horses eventually began to communicate spontaneously, sometimes stating that he was tired or his leg was sore, or that another horse had been beaten by a caretaker. My purpose for sharing this information is to remind ourselves that horses are most likely very aware of what is, or has been done to them, and the emotional and psychological effects cannot be denied.

Gandhi, one of the early pioneers of non-violent civil disobedience, said, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

Honorable Members Of The Assembly, I would like your YES vote for AB666.

Sincerely,

Lynda Lambert
5653 County Road K
New Franken, WI 54229"



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

Strengthen Wisconsin's Law on Animal Sexual Abuse!



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

What is animal sexual abuse?

It is the sexual molestation of an animal by a human. Animal sexual abuse, like rape, is the eroticization of violence, control and exploitation.

Why does it matter?

Animal sexual abuse is the single strongest predictor of increased risk for committing child sexual abuse.

In a study of over 44,000 adult male sex offenders, researchers concluded that animal sexual abuse is the number one risk factor and the strongest predictor of increased risk for sexual abuse of a child.

Some studies have found high rates of sexual assault of animals in the backgrounds of serial sexual homicide perpetrators. This is one reason why bestiality and other forms of animal cruelty are now tracked by the FBI as a Group A offense in the National Incident Based Reporting System, in the same category as rape and murder. Establishing animal sexual abuse as a separate crime allows law enforcement to identify potentially dangerous sexual predators in their community.

Isn't it already illegal?

Wisconsin Chapter 994, Crimes Against Sexual Morality, makes it a crime for anyone to commit an act of sexual gratification using his or her sex organ, mouth, or anus and the sex organ, mouth, or anus of an animal. Only prohibiting contact with a sex organ is a major loophole in the law that has caused convictions to be overturned on appeal.

In addition, Wisconsin's animal cruelty law only applies in cases where there is provable physical injury to the animal. Many acts of animal sexual abuse are filmed and discovered well after the incident occurs, so the requisite animal or medical evidence to substantiate physical injury cannot be recovered.

Finally, animals, like women and children, are trafficked, sold, and traded for sex and frequently used in the pornography industry. Trafficking animals for sex is not currently prohibited in Wisconsin.

The following elements are needed to strengthen and close loopholes in Wisconsin's law:

- Prohibit engaging in sexual contact with animals with any part of the body or an object;
- Prohibit promoting, trafficking, advertising, or soliciting animals for sex;
- Prohibit engaging in sexual contact with animals in the presence of a minor or coercing others;
- Increase the penalty from misdemeanor to a felony regardless of injury;
- Require the court to order the convicted person to refrain from contact with animals and surrender any animals in their possession;
- Require psychological assessment;
- Exempt veterinary procedures, accepted animal husbandry and animal care, artificial insemination, and conformation judging.



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

January 22, 2018

To: The Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Re: Assembly Bill 666

Dear Committee Members,

Many of you are familiar with Wisconsin's serial horse rapist, Sterling Rachwal, a habitual offender of animal sexual abuse who has been in and out of prison and mental institutions for decades. After being caught on camera last year assaulting a horse not far from my home, he is once again free because of Wisconsin's woefully lacking laws.

You may be unaware that bestiality is NOT a problem isolated to this one individual; literally thousands of Wisconsinites solicit or offer sex with animals online – thousands, this is not a typo. It's a far more pervasive and disturbing problem than most people realize. If you're not particularly concerned about the welfare of animals, you may be interested to know that this type of abuse is the single strongest predictor of increased risk for committing child sexual abuse.

I applaud Representative Jacque for having the guts to talk about this issue. No one wants to talk about it. I don't want to talk about it. But I'm compelled to because as a Wisconsin resident and a member of the equine community, I've had enough – we need stronger laws NOW. I'm embarrassed to be a taxpayer in a state that has let this despicable and dangerous behavior be classified as a "misdemeanor" for this long because it's too sordid to talk about. There is no valid argument for choosing not to support this legislation.

I regretfully am unable to attend this week's hearing in person. I ask that you give my letter serious consideration and urge you to back A.B. 666. Be brave enough to join Representative Jacque in supporting this critical bill.

Respectfully,

Susan Marland

Susan Marland
Two Rivers, WI

cc: Melissa Tedrowe, HSUS Wisconsin State Director, State Affairs