



LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE
QUICK NOTES
Second Regular Session, 19th Congress

Public Hearing of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food, and Agrarian Reform joint with the Committees on Civil Service, Government Reorganization, and Professional Regulation; Finance; and Ways and Means

Chairperson: Sen. Cynthia A. Villar

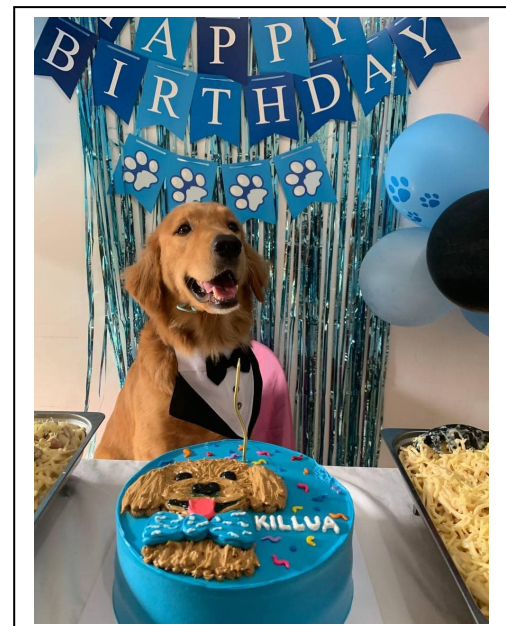
15 May 2024, Wednesday, 10:30 AM, Sen. Laurel Room, Senate

Re: Animal Welfare

- **S. No. 2054—Sen. Raffy T. Tulfo**
- **S. No. 2458—Sens. Grace Poe, Nancy Binay, and Joel Villanueva**
- **Privilege speech of Senator Poe on the killing of Killua**

Background

- Republic Act No. 8485, passed in 1998, was established to protect and promote the welfare of all animals in the country. This law was amended in 2019 by Republic Act No. 10631, specifically updating the sections related to offenses and penalties for individuals who commit animal cruelty.
- Despite the laws, incidents of animal cruelty, including the killing and consumption of dogs, still occur. For example, a three-year-old golden retriever named Killua was reportedly killed by Anthony Solares because the dog was being aggressive. Other incidents include the stabbing to death of an Aspin (asong Pinoy) named Erika by a South Korean national, and a dog being hurled by a mall security guard.
- These cases have drawn significant attention, prompting Sen. Grace Poe to deliver a privilege speech emphasizing the need for stronger laws to improve animal welfare in the country.
- Senator Tulfo filed Senate Bill No. 2054, while Senators Poe, Binay, and Villanueva filed Senate Bill No. 2458 to strengthen animal welfare provisions and establish an Animal Welfare Bureau to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of the law.



Highlights of Senate Bill Nos. 2054 and 2458

- The bills contain animal welfare principles, including the five-basic freedom of animals: (1) freedom from thirst, hunger, and malnutrition; (2) freedom from physical discomfort and pain; (3) freedom from injury and disease; (4) freedom to conform to essential behavioral patterns; and (5) freedom from fear and distress.
- As proposed, an Animal Welfare Bureau will be established as an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA). Additionally, regional, provincial, city, municipal, and barangay Animal Welfare Units will be created to implement the measure at local levels. An interagency emergency response program, involving local government units and non-government organizations, will also be established.
- The Philippine National Police, Armed Forces of the Philippines, National Bureau of Investigation, and other law enforcement agencies will designate animal welfare enforcement officers to assist in implementing the measure. Additionally, animal welfare enforcement officers from NGOs, citizens' groups, community organizations, and other volunteers who have undergone the necessary training will also be deputized by the DA.
- The bills outline prohibited acts and their corresponding penalties, including bans on animal fighting, killing of animals, dog meat trading, abandonment, ear cropping, tail docking, de-vocalization, and declawing, among others.
- An Animal Welfare Fund will be administered by the Animal Welfare Bureau as a special account in the Bureau of Treasury.
- The bills also propose the integration of mandatory animal welfare education into the curriculum for all primary and secondary schools, both public and private.

Possible Points for Discussion

1. How can existing animal welfare laws be better enforced? What are the barriers to compliance, and how can they be overcome? Are the current penalties for animal cruelty insufficient to deter offenders?
2. What specific legislative updates are being considered to strengthen animal welfare? How will these proposals address the existing challenges and gaps in the current animal welfare framework?
3. Is there adequate funding for animal welfare programs and initiatives? How can resources be allocated more effectively to support animal welfare enforcement and education?

4. How can public awareness about animal welfare issues be increased? What role should schools, media, and community organizations play in educating the public about animal rights and responsibilities?
5. How can the capacity of local government units (LGUs) and community organizations be strengthened to address animal welfare issues?
6. How can coordination between different government agencies and non-government organizations be improved for more effective animal welfare enforcement? What mechanisms can be established to ensure seamless collaboration and information sharing?
7. How can animal welfare practices be made more sustainable in the long term? What incentives or support can be given by LGUs to private organizations that provide shelter and care to stray animals?
8. Should LGUs have their own veterinary services for both domestic and stray animals? How can veterinary care be made more affordable and accessible?