

Dear Chair Prozanki, Vice Chair Close, members of the committee, thank you for reading our testimony.

Our names are Declan Cruz, Tillie Knox-Warshaw and Kalina Winstead; we are from Ms. McCandless' middle school Public Speaking class in Portland.

We have been researching animal abuse and the laws with it. Right now there is a law that states that the top amount of time in prison is five years. Also there is a sentencing grid that counteracts the law making the top amount of time in prison 120 days. The grid is what the judges go by. Our proposition is that we want animal abuse to go higher on the grid chart. At this moment animal abuse is a level three but we want it to go up to a level six or higher. Right now we feel that the law is just a cover up to please the public eye and the sentencing grid is what is really going on. So if by some reason a mass murderer was released from prison, then really abused 5 puppies, 8 kittens, 9 bunnies, and 3 parrots, they would only go to jail for 120 days. This is why we would like animal abuse to become a six or more on the grid chart; people who committed a crime like this would stay in jail for much longer than they would now. We could prevent the amount of repeated offenders if we raise it on the grid chart. We talked to a psychotherapist, Brandy Poirier, who explained that sometimes people start with animal abuse then move on to other bad behavior like human abuse or setting fires. We believe in this cause because we've seen animal abuse caught on tape, and heard the stories. We want to help stop this if we can.

Some of the stuff we've heard was that this guy put his grandmother's Chihuahua in the oven. This is something that we would like to stop, not this crime only but animal abuse in general. We have seen some of the crimes, and it horrified us, as we all love animals, and think of them more like family rather than pets. By helping us reaching our goal to make animal abuse a level six on the grid we could help stop animal abuse.

Thank you,

Declan Cruz, Tillie Knox-Warshaw and Kalina Winstead