STATE OF NEW YORK

9569

IN SENATE

March 25, 2026

Introduced by Sen. MARTINEZ -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Codes

AN ACT to amend the penal law, in relation to companion animals

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The penal law is amended by adding a new article 243 to read as follows:

ARTICLE 243

COMPANION ANIMALS

Section 243.00 Companion animals are sentient beings.

§ 243.00 Companion animals are sentient beings.

1. Companion animals, including dogs, cats, and such other animals as defined in section three hundred fifty of the agriculture and markets law, are sentient beings capable of experiencing pain, stress, and fear, as well as love and affection, and are entitled to respect and consideration, protection from abuse, neglect, and cruelty, and the maximization of their welfare. For that reason, such companion animals shall be considered victims of animal cruelty crimes, including but not limited to all offenses as defined in article twenty-six of the agriculture and markets law, and shall be treated as such in a court of law.

2. Nothing in this section shall be construed to reduce any protections afforded to any animal under any other provision of law, rule or regulation or article twenty-six of the agriculture and markets law.

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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