



**FIGHTING CRIME BUILDING HOPE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: FEBRUARY 27, 2015

## **Updates to the “ACT” ANIMAL CRUELTY TASKFORCE Announced During National Justice for Animals Week**

*DA David Soares Named a “Top Ten Animal Defender” by  
Animal Legal Defense Fund*

**ALBANY, NY** – In recognition of National Justice for Animals Week, District Attorney P. David Soares announced some updates to the “ACT” Animal Cruelty Taskforce led by his office at the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society this morning.

The first announcement is the creation of a new webpage that will be hosted at the District Attorney’s Office homepage [www.albanycountyda.com](http://www.albanycountyda.com). By clicking on the paw logo on the main page of the website, visitors can find resources about animal cruelty prevention, a list of local cases, and learn about partners in the community who “ACT” alongside the DA’s Office in the mission of eradicating animal cruelty.

In addition, DA Soares also announced the launch of an App hosted by The New York State Animal Protection Federation and sponsored by the Albany County DA’s Office. The App includes all of the Animal Laws currently active in New York law. You can follow links to download the App on the [DA’s Office “ACT” website](#) or the [NYSAPF website](#). Now, local

police, sheriff's departments and anyone else concerned with animal welfare, can have access to up to date laws relating to animals and animal cruelty on their smartphones.

Finally, the "ACT" Taskforce humbly acknowledges the national recognition from the Animal Legal Defense Fund that honors DA David Soares as a 2015 "Top Ten Animal Defender." The Defense Fund writes, "Animal victims of abuse cannot speak for themselves, but these extraordinary people are taking a stand in seeking justice for abused and neglected animals." Information about the other nine remarkable awardees can be found at the [Defense Fund's website](#).

"It is a true honor to be awarded with this accolade, and I owe it to the members of the community, law enforcement, and our Taskforce, who are committed to seeking justice for our animal companions every day," remarked DA David Soares.

Brad Shear, Director of the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society said of today's announcements, "I feel very lucky to live and work in a county with a prosecutor who understands the importance of protecting animals and the people who love them. We have had a strong partnership with the District Attorney for many years and look forward to that relationship continuing to strengthen and grow so Albany County will be a safe place for animals. The coordination of response to animal cruelty led by Mr. Soares is essential for an effective animal protection program."

Libby Post, Executive Director of the New York State Animal Protection Federation commented, "Partnering with Albany DA David Soares helps both of us in our mutual goal of bettering the lives of animals through policy development and law enforcement. The Federation is very grateful to DA Soares for his support of our NYS Animal Law App which, since launching last week, has had over 120 downloads."

In August 2013, DA Soares announced the formation of an Animal Cruelty Taskforce to be led by his office. The overall mission of the taskforce is to utilize a multi-agency response to animal abuse, neglect, and hoarding cases, as well as combine law enforcement prevention efforts and public education outreach. DA Soares has designated a felony level Assistant District Attorney from the Special Victims Unit to oversee all animal related crimes. In addition to prosecuting these crimes in the courtroom, prosecutors from the office will also play an important role on the taskforce.

"The District Attorney's Office is tasked with prosecuting offenders who violate the law, and in cases of animal abuse or hoarding, it is vital to hold offenders accountable while also ensuring these crimes are never repeated," said DA David Soares. "By enhancing this taskforce it is our goal to make sure all responders are employing best practices in Albany County, prioritizing prevention strategies in every community, and educating the public about what they can do to help."

Prosecutors collaborate with medical and rescue professionals to hold trainings for veterinarians, pet store operators, groomers, and anyone else who may be the "eyes and ears" in the pet and animal community. The taskforce also seeks to address issues that arise in the rural population, such as livestock and farm animals.

Taskforce members include local veterinarians, law enforcement officers, delegates from the New York State Attorney General's Office, members of animal rescue shelters such as the Mohawk & Hudson River Humane Society, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), New York State Animal Protection Federation, and representatives from Cornell Cooperative Extension to aid in the rural components of the taskforce goals.

Please stay tuned for upcoming announcements from the "ACT" Taskforce, including a mobile forensic unit, travelling vaccination clinics, and trainings for law enforcement and veterinarians.



*See Something?*

*Say Something!*

If you suspect animal abuse or neglect, you can report to your local law enforcement agency, call the Mohawk & Hudson Humane Society at (518) 434-8128, or visit their website [mohawkhumanesociety.org](http://mohawkhumanesociety.org)

#### **SIGNS THAT AN ANIMAL MIGHT BE ABUSED**

##### **Physical Signs**

- Collar so tight that it has caused a neck wound or has become embedded in the pet's neck
- Open wounds, signs of multiple healed wounds or an ongoing injury or illness that isn't being treated
- Untreated skin conditions that have caused loss of hair, scaly skin, bumps or rashes
- Extreme thinness or emaciation—bones may be visible
- Fur infested with fleas, ticks or other parasites
- Patches of bumpy, scaly skin rashes
- Signs of inadequate grooming, such as extreme matting of fur, overgrown nails and dirty coat
- Weakness, limping or the inability to stand or walk normally
- Heavy discharge from eyes or nose
- An owner striking or physically abusing an animal

##### **Environmental Signs**

- Pets are tied up alone outside for long periods of time without adequate food or water, or with food or water that is unsanitary
- Pets are kept outside in inclement weather without access to adequate shelter
- Pets are kept in an area littered with feces, garbage, broken glass or other objects that could harm them
- Animals are housed in kennels or cages (very often crowded in with other animals) that are too small to allow them to stand, turn around and make normal movements possibly with too many other animals

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