



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 2525



Introduced by: **HON. CARL NICOLAS C. CARI**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has long recognized the importance of family and the bonds that define it. Over time, this definition has expanded to include our animal companions; thus, societal perception now categorizes our pets as cherished members of our families, rather than mere chattel or property, providing emotional support, companionship, and even acting as service animals for individuals with disabilities. Their welfare and safety have become a matter of public concern, as evidenced by the passage of Republic Act No. 8485, also known as the Animal Welfare Act of 1998, and its subsequent amendments.

Despite these legislative advancements, a significant gap remains. While we have laws that protect animals from cruelty, neglect, and illegal trade, there is a lack of specific legislation addressing the wrongful taking or abduction of a pet from its owner. This gap leaves pet owners vulnerable and without adequate legal recourse when their beloved companions are stolen. Although taking of personal property is considered theft under the Revised Penal Code, and legal interpretation has extended the definition of personal property to include domesticated animals, the penalty for this crime is often based on the monetary value of the animal, which is an inadequate measure of the pet's true value to its owner. By considering pet abduction as a simple theft of personal property, the legal framework fails to capture the devastating impact and the emotional and psychological distress of losing a family pet that cannot be quantified in pesos.

With the rising incidents of pet abduction, this proposed legislation seeks to fill this void by creating a specific and comprehensive law that addresses the unlawful taking of companion animals.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

CARL NICOLAS C. CARI
Representative
5th District, Leyte



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 2525

Introduced by: **HON. CARL NICOLAS C. CARI**

**AN ACT CREATING THE OFFENSE OF COMPANION ANIMAL ABDUCTION
INCLUDING OTHER ANIMALS COMMONLY KEPT AS PETS, PROVIDING
PENALTIES THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in
Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Pet Protection Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the welfare of all animals, particularly companion animals such as dogs and cats, and other animals commonly kept as pets, which have become integral members of human families. The State recognizes that companion animals are not mere personal property, but sentient beings deserving of protection from cruelty, abuse, and exploitation.

SECTION 3. *Purpose.* – In furtherance of this policy, it is the intent of this Act to:

- (a) Elevate the act of pet abduction from a mere property crime to a distinct criminal offense, thereby reflecting the unique relationship between a pet and its owner and acknowledging the sentience of the animal.
- (b) Provide a more specific and stringent legal framework to deter and penalize individuals who unlawfully take, steal, or abduct a companion animal.
- (c) Ensure that the emotional and psychological trauma suffered by both the animal and its owner is given due consideration in the prosecution and sentencing of offenders.
- (d) Safeguard the public welfare by curbing the illegal trade of stolen animals and preventing their use in cruel and inhumane activities.

SECTION 4. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

(a) Companion Animal: Refers to any domesticated dog or cat that is customarily kept and cared for by humans for purposes of companionship or as a pet, including but not limited to purebreds, mixed breeds, and mongrels. This term shall not include animals kept primarily for commercial purposes, such as those used for breeding in licensed facilities, for security or guard services, or hunting, unless they also serve as a companion to a person or family.



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

(b) Pet Abduction: The unlawful and malicious taking of a companion animal from the possession, custody, or control of its owner, without the owner's consent. This includes, but is not limited to, stealing a companion animal from a residence, vehicle, or public place, or luring it away with the intent to deprive the owner of its possession.

(c) Owner: Any person or persons who have legal title to, or who harbor, or have custody, care, or control of, a companion animal. This includes a registered owner, an adopter, or any person who provides regular care and shelter for a companion animal.

(d) Possession, Custody, or Control: The physical and continuous care and supervision of a companion animal, regardless of whether the person has legal title to the animal. This includes, but is not limited to, the owner's home, backyard, vehicle, or a public area where the animal is with the owner or a designated guardian.

(e) Unlawful and Malicious Taking: An act of taking a companion animal without any right or claim of ownership, and with the intent to permanently or temporarily deprive the owner of its use and enjoyment, or to exploit the animal for personal gain. The term "malicious" denotes an intent to inflict harm, distress, or injury to either the animal or its owner.

(f) Animal Welfare Organization: A non-profit organization or entity duly registered with the appropriate government agency, whose primary purpose is the promotion of animal welfare, including the rescue, rehabilitation, and rehoming of animals.

SECTION 5. *Prohibited Acts.* – It shall be unlawful for a person to take, steal, seize, or otherwise unlawfully and maliciously take a companion animal from the possession, custody, or control of its owner, without the owner's consent or legal justification.

- (a) It shall be unlawful for a person to knowingly keep, harbor, or conceal a companion animal that has been unlawfully taken from its owner, or to refuse to return such an animal to its rightful owner after being made aware of its unlawful taking.
- (b) It shall be unlawful for a person to intentionally alter or remove any form of permanent identification from a companion animal, such as a microchip, tattoo, or unique mark, with the intent to conceal its ownership or facilitate its sale. This includes the act of placing a microchip from another animal on a stolen pet.
- (c) It shall be unlawful for a person to aid, abet, conspire with, or assist another person in the commission of any act of pet abduction or any related prohibited act under this law.
- (d) It shall be unlawful for a person to sell, trade, offer for sale, or use a stolen companion animal for any commercial purpose, including but not limited to:
 - 1. Selling the animal to a third party or a pet shop.
 - 2. Using the animal for illegal breeding or in breeding mills.
 - 3. Offering the animal for ransom or a reward.
 - 4. Using the animal in illegal activities such as dog fighting or animal gambling.
- (e) It shall be unlawful for a person to subject a companion animal that has been unlawfully taken to any form of cruelty, maltreatment, abuse, or neglect as defined under the Animal Welfare Act (Republic Act No. 8485, as amended).
- (f) It shall be unlawful for a person to threaten to abduct or harm a companion animal with the intent to extort money, property, or other consideration from its owner.



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SECTION 6. *Exceptions.* – The provisions of this Act shall not apply to the following acts or individuals:

- (a) The taking, seizure, or impounding of a companion animal by any duly authorized law enforcement officer, animal control officer, or other public servant acting within the scope of their official duties, including but not limited to:
 - 1. Impounding an animal found to be a public nuisance or a threat to public safety.
 - 2. Seizing an animal as part of a lawful search and seizure operation or in the execution of a court order.
 - 3. Taking an animal from a situation of documented cruelty, neglect, or abuse as authorized by law.
- (b) The temporary taking of a companion animal for the sole purpose of providing necessary medical care or immediate rescue from a life-threatening situation. The person who takes the animal under this exception must:
 - 1. Promptly notify the owner, if known.
 - 2. Immediately bring the animal to a registered veterinarian or a recognized animal welfare organization.
 - 3. Exert reasonable effort to locate and return the animal to its rightful owner.
- (c) The taking or causing of harm to a companion animal that is necessary to defend one's person, family members, or other individuals from imminent threat or attack by said animal.
- (d) The lawful taking, acceptance, or transfer of a companion animal by a duly registered animal welfare organization acting within the scope of its charter and in accordance with existing laws and regulations, provided that:
 - 1. The animal is voluntarily surrendered by its owner.
 - 2. The animal is found to be stray, abandoned, or lost, and the organization exerts reasonable effort to locate its owner.
 - 3. The organization adheres to all reporting requirements to local authorities regarding the intake of such animals.
- (e) The act of a rightful owner taking back their companion animal from a person who has unlawfully taken it, provided that the owner can prove ownership through a microchip, veterinary records, or other verifiable documentation.
- (f) The offense of companion animal abduction is not committed if at any time before the unlawful and malicious taking of the companion animal, the person who took the companion animal and its rightful owner had been living together in the same household and subsequently ceases to live together.

SECTION 7. *Penalties.* – Any person who commits the act of pet abduction as defined in this Act shall, upon conviction, be punished by:

- (a) **For Simple Pet Abduction:** A fine of not less than **Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (P200,000.00)** or imprisonment of not less than one (1) year to two (2) years and six months or both, at the discretion of the court.



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

(b) For Pet Abduction with Aggravating Circumstances: The penalty shall be elevated to a fine of not less than **Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (P300,000.00)** or imprisonment of two (2) years, six (6) months and one (1) day to four (4) years if the abduction is committed under any of the following circumstances:

1. The animal is subsequently sold, traded, or offered for a reward or ransom.
2. The animal is subjected to any form of cruelty, maltreatment, or neglect as defined in the Animal Welfare Act (R.A. No. 8485, as amended).
3. The animal is used for illegal activities such as dog fighting, illegal breeding, or illegal research.
4. The abductor is a member of a syndicate or a group of three (3) or more persons acting in conspiracy.
5. The abductor is a public officer or employee who uses their position to facilitate the crime.
6. The abduction causes severe emotional and psychological distress to the owner, as certified by a licensed medical professional.

(c) For Pet Abduction Resulting in Death: If the act of pet abduction results in the death of the companion animal, the perpetrator shall be punished by a fine of not less than **Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000.00)** and/or imprisonment of four (4) years and one (1) day to six (6) years.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Agriculture through its Bureau of Animal Industry, in coordination with the Philippine National Police (PNP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to effectively implement this Act.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall not be affected.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

APPROVED,