

HB 563

2006

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to juvenile animal cruelty; providing  
3 legislative findings; creating a task force on juvenile  
4 cruelty to animals; providing powers and duties; requiring  
5 the task force to consider specified issues and make  
6 recommendations; providing membership; requiring a report;  
7 providing for administrative support and travel  
8 reimbursement; providing for dissolution of the task  
9 force; providing an effective date.

10  
11 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

12  
13 Section 1. Task force on juvenile cruelty to animals.--

14 (1) The Legislature recognizes that multiple research  
15 studies have found statistically significant correlations  
16 between acts of animal cruelty by juveniles and violent behavior  
17 against persons and that a literature review conducted by the  
18 federal Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention found  
19 that juvenile animal cruelty may be characteristic of the  
20 developmental histories of 25 to 60 percent of violent adult  
21 offenders. The Legislature further recognizes that it is  
22 critical for the rehabilitation of juvenile animal cruelty  
23 offenders and for the protection of society that the Legislature  
24 establish a policy requiring the Department of Juvenile Justice  
25 to assess the specific rehabilitation needs of juvenile animal  
26 cruelty offenders and to provide programs that will treat these  
27 offenders and halt further antisocial conduct.

28 (2) There is created a task force to review and evaluate

29 the state's laws that define and address animal cruelty and the  
30 department's practices for treating and rehabilitating juvenile  
31 offenders of such laws. The task force shall make findings that  
32 include, but are not limited to:

33 (a) Identification of statutes that address animal  
34 cruelty.

35 (b) Compilation of statistics regarding the number of  
36 juveniles in this state who have been found, between July 1,  
37 2001, and June 30, 2006, to have committed an act of animal  
38 cruelty in violation of s. 828.12, Florida Statutes, and  
39 identification of the disposition imposed in each of those  
40 cases.

41 (c) A profile of the delinquency and criminal histories of  
42 the juveniles involved in the cases identified in paragraph (b)  
43 before and after commission of the act of animal cruelty.

44 (d) Identification of the department's practices,  
45 procedures, and programs for the treatment and rehabilitation of  
46 juvenile animal cruelty offenders.

47 (e) A summary of research regarding juvenile animal  
48 cruelty offenders and of any recommendations contained therein  
49 for the treatment and rehabilitation of these offenders.

50 (f) Identification of best and evidence-based practices  
51 and model programs used in other jurisdictions for the treatment  
52 and rehabilitation of juvenile animal cruelty offenders.

53 (3) Based on its findings, the task force shall make  
54 recommendations for the improvement of the state's policies and  
55 laws that address juvenile animal cruelty. Such recommendations  
56 shall specifically include, but are not limited to,

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57 identification of methods to assess the needs of juvenile animal  
58 cruelty offenders, treatment programs that will best  
59 rehabilitate juvenile animal cruelty offenders, service delivery  
60 mechanisms to ensure that recommended treatment programs are  
61 available statewide, and any funding needs above existing  
62 resources to ensure adequate availability of recommended  
63 treatment programs.

64 (4) On or before August 1, 2006, the secretary of the  
65 department shall appoint up to 12 members to the task force. The  
66 task force membership shall include, but is not limited to:  
67 three persons who collectively have experience with the conduct  
68 of juvenile animal cruelty research and with the treatment and  
69 rehabilitation of juvenile animal cruelty offenders; two  
70 department employees who collectively are responsible for  
71 research and planning and delinquency prevention and treatment  
72 programming; and two representatives of providers of juvenile  
73 delinquency prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services.

74 (5) The task force shall submit a written report of its  
75 findings and recommendations to the Governor, the President of  
76 the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by  
77 January 1, 2007.

78 (6) Administrative support for the task force shall be  
79 provided by the department. Members of the task force shall  
80 serve without compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement  
81 under s. 112.061, Florida Statutes, for travel and per diem  
82 expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.  
83 The task force shall strive to minimize travel and per diem  
84 expenses by performing, when practicable, its duties in the

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85 location where the majority of task force members reside.

86 (7) The task force shall be dissolved upon submission of  
87 its report.

88 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.