

We, the undersigned, endorse the following petition:

SUPPORT FOR ADDING AN ANIMAL LAW COURSE TO THE LAW SCHOOL CURRICULUM

We, the undersigned, encourage your support for the addition of an animal law course to the law school curriculum. Animal law is a combination of statutory and case law in which the nature – legal, social or biological – of nonhuman animals is an important factor. Animal law encompasses companion animals, wildlife and animals raised for food and research.

As you may know, animal law is being taught at some of the most reputable and respected law schools in the throughout the country. Along with this petition, please find a list of law schools that currently offer an animal law to their students. This list is comprised of highly ranked schools such as Harvard, Stanford, UCLA, Northwestern, University of Michigan and Duke. As of August 2007, almost 90 preeminent law schools throughout the country had added an animal law class and/or seminar to their curriculum. Equally impressive are the number of student animal law chapters rapidly appearing throughout the country. At last count, there were over 100 such chapters.

The increased interest in animal law is to be expected considering, as a society, we form strong attachments with our companion animals and are far more likely to view them as family than property. In fact, a recent survey revealed that “More than half of companion animal guardians would prefer a dog or cat to a human if they were stranded on a deserted island.” Another statistic reveals, “Fifty percent of pet owners would be ‘very likely’ to risk their lives to save their pets, and another thirty-three percent indicated they would be ‘somewhat likely’ to put their own lives in danger.” William C. Root, *Man’s Best Friend: Property or Family Member? An Examination of the Legal Classification of Companion Animals and its Impact on Damages Recoverable for their Wrongful Death or Injury*, 47 Vill. L. Rev. 423, 423 (2002).

In light of the above statistics, it is not surprising animal law is no longer considered a “fringe” area of the law. In fact, animal law permeates and affects most traditional areas of the law – including tort, contract, criminal and constitutional law. Whether or not a student decides to practice animal law, he or she must be prepared for when traditional law and animal law intersect, which is happening more frequently. Examples of this intersection include:

- Animal custody disputes in divorce or separations.
- Veterinary malpractice cases.
- Housing disputes involving “no pets” policies and discrimination laws.
- Damages cases involving the wrongful death or injury to a companion animal.
- Enforceable trusts for companion animals under new UTC provisions being adopted by states across the country.
- Criminal law encompassing domestic violence and anti-cruelty laws.

The rapidly emerging field of animal law can no longer be ignored, as it is becoming an accepted and practiced field within society and our legal system. We are hopeful you will consider providing students with a thought-provoking forum to discuss this developing and dynamic area of the law. As animal law continues to grow and intersect with traditional areas of the law, the law school and law students – including animal activists, animal lovers, the curious, the indifferent and the dissenters – would greatly benefit from such a course offering. For these reasons, your consideration of the addition of animal law to the law school's curriculum is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your time and attention regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned.