

Our Biggest Legislative Victories of 2020

From [ALDF Animal Legal Defense Fund](#)

December 2020

While 2020 presented unforeseen challenges, the Animal Legal Defense Fund made substantial progress for animals in legislatures across the country. Below are a few of our biggest successes for animals this year as well as a look ahead at some of our priority bills as we move into 2021.



California

- California became the first state to protect wild animals from super-toxic rat poisons. [The California Ecosystems Protection Act](#) puts in place safeguards against ‘one-feeding-kills’ second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides.
- [Bella’s Act](#) strengthened California’s landmark retail pet sales ban by refining existing law to crack down on animal laundering and end all retail sales of puppies, kittens, and rabbits.

Colorado

- Colorado is now the sixth state in the nation to [ban cruel wildlife killing contests](#), where participants compete to kill as many animals as they can during a specified time period. (Five months later, Washington became the seventh state to ban these contests, another state effort we supported).
- [The Egg-Laying Hen Confinement Standards](#) bill upgraded standards for egg-laying hens in Colorado, ending the intensive confinement of millions of birds in the state by January 1, 2023.

Kentucky

- Until this year, Kentucky was the only state with a law barring veterinarians from reporting suspected animal abuse. [SB 21](#) ended this prohibition and empowers veterinarians to report suspected cruelty.

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Florida

- Charter Question 1, the [“Right to Clean Water” initiative](#), in Orange County was a groundbreaking ‘rights of nature’ charter amendment that recognizes county waterways have a right to be protected from pollution. Endorsed by the Animal Legal Defense Fund, the initiative passed overwhelmingly with 89% of the vote.

STATE BILLS STILL IN PROGRESS



New Jersey

- We’re pushing hard to enact the nation’s third Courtroom Animal Advocate Program (CAAP). [A.4533/S.2868](#) provides for an advocate in criminal cases concerning the welfare or care of an animal, ensuring more animal victims have a voice in legal proceedings. The bill passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee with unanimous support and is expected to move in January.
- New Jersey may also be poised to become the next state to ban cruel gestation crates, with legislation being revived to protect mother pigs from being confined in spaces so small that they cannot stand up, lie down, turn around freely, nor fully extend their limbs. Nearly identical bills passed with overwhelming bipartisan legislative support in prior years.

Massachusetts

- [H.4131](#) would crack down on poaching and protect the state’s wild animals by modernizing penalties for illegal hunting and enter Massachusetts in the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact.
- An animal possession ban bill, [S.2924](#), would prohibit a person convicted of animal cruelty from possessing animals for at least five years after their release from custody.

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FEDERAL WORK



A new administration means new opportunities. We're hopeful the new administration will be more receptive to adopting animal friendly policies, and we're laying the groundwork by reaching out to transition teams with our top priorities. Our work in Congress also continues, with a special emphasis on captive wildlife and farmed animals.

On December 3rd, the House of Representatives passed the [Big Cat Public Safety Act](#) 272 to 114, a critically important bill that will help end the rampant abuse of tigers and other big cats across the country by prohibiting private possession and making it illegal for exhibitors to allow direct contact with cubs, ending dangerous interactions such as cub petting. We continue our work to end one the cruelest methods of "depopulation" on factory farms: ventilation shutdown, where animals are roasted alive and suffocated to death. And we're pushing the [Farm System Reform Act](#), which would overhaul our country's cruel and environmentally destructive animal agricultural industry, in part, by placing a moratorium on the largest factory farms.