

PAGE 2: CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

Q1: Candidate Name

Rep. Brenda Barton

Q2: Party Affiliation

Republican

Q3: Legislative Chamber

House

Q4: Legislative District

LD6

PAGE 4: FARM ANIMALS

Last session, cattle industry lobbyists persuaded lawmakers to introduce [House Bill 2587](#), which would have severely weakened Arizona's animal cruelty law. As introduced, the bill would have criminalized whistleblowers that expose animal abuse at livestock and slaughter facilities. The bill also would have weakened cruelty laws for livestock, including horses, and completely removed all protections from cruelty for poultry.

The introduced bill would also have changed Arizona's strong definition of 'animal' under the state animal cruelty law, removing livestock from its protection. It would have created new weakened laws for farm animals and removed all authority from law enforcement to investigate abuse of livestock. Following opposition from a coalition of animal protection groups, bipartisan legislators, law enforcement, state and national media, and others, the bill was amended to remove the cruelty reporting penalty and other harmful provisions. However, the amended bill would still have done much more harm than good for Arizona's animals. Although the measure failed to pass the 2014 legislative session, it will likely be introduced in coming sessions, despite recent [polls](#) showing that Arizona voters overwhelmingly oppose weakening the animal cruelty code.

Q11: Do you support removing farm animals and horses from protection under Arizona's animal cruelty law and placing them under new, weaker laws in the agriculture code?

Comments: As the PS of HB2587 your description above mis-characterizes and incorrectly represents the final legislation as passed out of the House. Did your organization meet with the other stakeholders and approve the final drafts? I would be most happy to sit with your leadership and discuss this matter.

Humane Voters of AZ Response: Humane Voters of Arizona and other animal protection groups were not included in stakeholder meetings on HB 2587. Bill proponents created confusion by incorrectly stating that this measure had the support of animal protection groups, when it did not. The sponsors of HB 2587 made these statements in committee and on the House floor. In fact there was strong opposition from bipartisan lawmakers and humane organizations throughout Arizona. HB 2587 ended up passing the House by three votes and did not reach a final vote in the Senate.

HVA stands by its representation of HB 2587 as it passed the House. As the result of opposition from humane groups, law enforcement, and others, the original bill was amended to remove some of the most egregious language. As introduced, the bill would have prevented law enforcement from investigating animal cruelty and criminalized those who expose animal abuse. Although the measure was watered-down, the amended bill version that passed the House remained unnecessary, was poorly drafted, and contained archaic language that did not conform to our current animal cruelty law.

The majority of animal cruelty cases are able to be successfully prosecuted under Arizona's current animal cruelty code 13-2910, which has worked well for many years. Not only was HB 2587 unnecessary, it would have weakened protection for certain animals, made it harder for prosecutors to convict abusers, and would have created broad exemptions with unknown negative consequences. Moreover, the bill's vague language could have resulted in costly lawsuits paid for by taxpayers.

HVA thanks Rep. Barton for her invitation to discuss the bill and would appreciate being included in future stakeholder meetings on potential reintroduction of this measure.