

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 2012 without my signature.

This bill increases the maximum punishment for misdemeanor animal neglect from six months to one year in county jail. The misdemeanor provisions of the animal neglect statutes are intended to address less serious offenses. While there is no question that an animal suffers when criminally neglected, an individual who intentionally maims, tortures, or mutilates an animal should be treated more harshly by the justice system. Current law reflects this distinction. In addition, I cannot support a measure that increases the potential jail time for offenses against animals while the Legislature fails to provide incarceration as a potential punishment for offenders that smuggle wireless communication devices into our state prisons.

For these reasons, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger