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*****MEDIA ALERT*****

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PROSECUTOR MOERS HEADING TO INDIANAPOLIS TO TESTIFY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1165

VANDERBURGH COUNTY, Ind. — Vanderburgh County Prosecutor Diana Moers will be in Indianapolis on Wednesday as part of her continued efforts to help strengthen Indiana's laws protecting household pets and the penalties for those who would commit heinous crimes against them.

Prosecutor Moers will testify at the Indiana statehouse on Wednesday morning in support of *House Bill 1165, Various Animal Related Matters*.

HB 1165, authored by Representative Wendy McNamara and co-authored by Rep. Steve Bartels and Rep. Beau Baird, would:

- *Update Indiana's animal-related criminal statutes to clarify definitions, close enforcement gaps, and strengthen penalties for serious offenses.*
- *Eliminate financial deterrents that may prevent good Hoosier citizens from acting quickly and decisively when an animal has been left in a life-threatening situation.*
- *Recognize the unique value of a domestic animal to an owner and their family by elevating their theft to a Level 6 felony.*
- *Strengthen abandonment and neglect statutes by adding felony enhancements when conduct results in serious injury, death, occurs in the presence of a minor, or involves large-scale neglect (hoarding).*
- *Recognizes the role and value of law enforcement animals in public safety by increasing the penalty for killing a law enforcement animal from a Level 6 felony to a Level 5 felony.*

Under current Indiana law, some acts of cruelty against animals committed by first-time offenders can only be charged as a misdemeanor offense, regardless of how gruesome the offense might be. This is part of what motivated Prosecutor Moers to work with Rep. McNamara and others in this push for change.

Specific animal abuse/hoarding cases in Vanderburgh County that inspired these efforts include State of Indiana vs. Martin Haugland and State of Indiana vs. Shayna Burko.

Animals can't speak for themselves, so if you see something, say something: Call 911 and make a report if you suspect animal abuse, neglect, or hoarding in your area. Your call could save a life.