

**Public Policy Position
SB 283**

The Animal Law Section is a voluntary membership section of the State Bar of Michigan, comprised of 251 members. The Animal Law Section is not the State Bar of Michigan and the position expressed herein is that of the Animal Law Section only and not the State Bar of Michigan. To date, the State Bar does not have a position on this item.

The Animal Law Section has a public policy decision-making body with 15 members. On May 12, 2025, the Section adopted its position after an electronic discussion and vote. 13 members voted in favor of the Section's position, 0 members voted against this position, 0 members abstained, 2 members did not vote.

Support**Explanation:**

The Animal Law Section supports SB 283, which would amend the Michigan Penal Code to create a misdemeanor crime of stealing or otherwise taking a dog without the owner's consent. Penalties include imprisonment for not more than one year and/or a fine of \$500-\$1500. The bill would repeal MCL 287.308, which imposed a fine of \$50-\$500 for stealing a dog but only "where the value of such dog shall be in excess of \$100." According to a Pew research study, 97% of pet owners say their pets are part of their family, with more than half saying their pets are equivalent to human family members. This sentiment is not based on the pet's market value. The crime of stealing a dog should be part of the Penal Code and appropriate penalties should be imposed regardless of the dog's value.

Contact Person: Ann M. Griffin

Email: annmgriffin@hotmail.com