



NEWS RELEASE

Office of Representative Brenda Barton

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Rep. Brenda Barton, R-Payson (Dist. 6)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BUCKEYE ANIMAL ABUSER COULD GET STIFFER PENALTIES UNDER BARTON LEGISLATION

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX (March 14, 2014) – The nine horses seized by the Maricopa County Sheriff’s office Wednesday from a Buckeye home were severely malnourished, according to the Arizona Republic. In addition, 13 dogs were found on the property.

“It is important to note,” said Rep. Brenda Barton, author of HB 2587, “that the Buckeye case is already covered by statute for what is essentially domestic pets, in this case horses. These are not animals used in agricultural operations.”

The necessary distinction between agricultural and domestic animals incorporated into legislation sponsored by Rep. Barton would not have changed anything about the investigation and seizure. However, it could lead to stiffer penalties and a court ordered psychological evaluation for the defendant.

“The defendant could have received help from a mental health professional if my legislation were in place,” Rep. Barton added.

Rep. Barton’s legislation also adds animal hoarding to Arizona’s animal cruelty statutes. The statistics show that hoarding has become a growing issue. Under the current statute hoarding is not a crime and the language for existing violations is unclear.

“Hoarding is hard to define if agricultural animals and domestic animals are lumped under the same statute,” Rep. Barton added. With a clear distinction between the two groups, keeping a large number of dogs could be a violation and the owner could be charged in a situation like the one in Buckeye.

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