

Commonwealth of Virginia

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX

4110 CHAIN BRIDGE ROAD, ROOM 114

FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22030-4047

STEVE DESCANO
COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY

08/19/2020

COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY DESCANO OFFICIAL STATEMENT

Regarding Misinformation Surrounding Prosecution of Animal Cruelty

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA – Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano released the following statement regarding the spread of recent misinformation regarding the prosecution of animal cruelty offenses.

"Animal cruelty is a disturbing and pernicious act that is unacceptable and sadly present at times in any community. Perpetrators of animal cruelty should always be held accountable and I would never do anything to jeopardize the process to bring them to justice. Due to the spread of recent misinformation, it's important that I assure our community that these cases will continue to be prosecuted. Furthermore, it's important that I provide the public a glimpse at processes within our criminal justice system whenever possible. The Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney has traditionally not been involved in the vast majority of animal cruelty cases within the County. In cases where the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office is not involved, the Court maintains a proven process that has been employed here and the rest of Virginia for many years. To be clear: animal cruelty will continue to be prosecuted in Fairfax County and any suggestion otherwise is categorically false. Furthermore, it's false to suggest that any of the recent steps taken by this office are intended to diminish services or justice. In fact, this spurs the ongoing examination and constant reevaluation of how this office can not only be involved in as many cases as possible but do so in an ethical and responsible way that provides fair and equal justice for all—that has not been done here for many years. I'm deeply disturbed by anyone attempting to sow these falsehoods about my office or this county."

###