

ASSEMBLY JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3012

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 12, 2014

The Assembly Judiciary Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3012.

This bill would criminalize bestiality. Under current law, it is a criminal offense to torture or neglect an animal or creature or commit other acts of animal cruelty. This bill would amend R.S.4:22-17 to specifically make it a crime to use, or cause or procure the use of, an animal or creature in any kind of sexual manner or initiate any kind of sexual contact with the animal or creature, including, but not limited to, sodomizing the animal or creature. The bill defines “sexual contact” as any contact between a person and an animal by penetration of the penis or a foreign object into the vagina or anus, contact between the mouth and genitalia, or contact between the genitalia of one and the genitalia or anus of the other. The bill specifies that the term “sexual contact” does not include any medical procedure performed by a licensed veterinarian practicing veterinary medicine or an accepted animal husbandry practice.

Under the bill, bestiality would be a crime of the fourth degree unless the animal or creature dies or suffers serious bodily injury as a result of the violation, or the person has a prior conviction for an offense that would constitute animal cruelty under the statute, in which case bestiality would be a crime of the third degree. A crime of the fourth degree is punishable by up to 18 months’ imprisonment, a fine of up to \$10,000, or both. A crime of the third degree is punishable by three to five years’ imprisonment, a fine of up to \$15,000, or both.