



**Student Animal Legal  
Defense Fund**

at  
Western Michigan University  
Cooley Law School

**Testimony in Opposition of House Bill 4251  
House Criminal Justice Committee  
March 24, 2015**

Chairman Heise and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee:

The Student Animal Legal Defense Fund at Western Michigan University Cooley Law School is a student chapter of the national non-profit, the Animal Legal Defense Fund, an organization that works to protect and advance the interests of animals through the legal system. The Animal Legal Defense Fund has over 100,000 members and 200 law student chapters worldwide.

The Student Animal Legal Defense Fund at Western Michigan University Cooley Law School opposes HB 4251, which will promote the treatment of living animals as novelties and will increase the number of abandoned and neglected animals.

By repealing the prohibition on dyeing baby chicks, rabbits, and ducklings, Michigan would be promoting the sale of living animals as festive Easter gifts to children. Even though this practice has been banned, already-overburdened animal shelters and sanctuaries experience a rise in abandoned chicks and rabbits shortly after Easter, when children tire of them. Repealing this ban would increase the number of chicks, rabbits, and ducks sold as Easter gifts, and thus increase the number of unwanted pets after Easter when the dye wears off and the animals grow up.

The primary purpose of dyeing baby animals is to turn them into novelties for sale as Easter gifts. It is not uncommon for one family to purchase several animals at once because of their appealing colors, only to end up with more full-grown animals than they are able to care for. Instead of promoting living animals as disposable novelties, we should be teaching Michigan children the value of responsible pet ownership, which includes adopting animals from shelters, not taking actions that will likely increase the burden on them.

There are many ways to responsibly enjoy interaction with, and teach children about rabbits or baby farm animals. Dyeing their fur or feathers to increase profit around Easter-time is not one of them. It is for these reasons that the Student Animal Legal Defense Fund at Western Michigan University Cooley Law School respectfully urges the House Criminal Justice Committee to oppose HB 4251.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [prygoskia@cooley.edu](mailto:prygoskia@cooley.edu). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Alicia Prygoski, President  
Student Animal Legal Defense Fund at Western Michigan University Cooley Law School