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For Immediate Release

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## Man Charged with Animal Cruelty for Neglecting His Dog's Injuries, Leading to Amputation

*More than 55 Defendants Charged in Animal Abuse Cases in the Past Year*

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) said today that in the latest of a string of animal cruelty prosecutions by her office involving dogs, Osvaldo Deleon, 61, has been charged with one count of felony animal abuse and neglect for failing to seek medical attention for his dog's severely injured leg. The dog's leg had an open wound with exposed bone when officials with the county's Department of Animal Services (DAS) encountered it. The dog was taken into a veterinarian's care and ultimately his leg had to be amputated.

Deleon was arraigned on Monday in San Diego Superior Court and pleaded not guilty. If convicted, he faces a sentencing range of probation up to three years in custody.

"Our office is committed to holding people accountable for all forms of animal abuse, cruelty and neglect," said DA Stephan. "We are determined to be a voice for animals who are mistreated and to deliver justice on their behalf. We're constantly working with our law enforcement partners to identify and confirm potential abuse, especially when alerted to it by the community, and to prevent such abuse from occurring in the first place."

In the past year, the District Attorney's Office has filed animal cruelty-related charges against more than 55 defendants.

In December of last year, 61-year-old Todd Schuster was convicted of one count of felony animal cruelty and sentenced to two years in jail for viciously kicking a dog during a road rage incident and then running over the animal with his vehicle, killing it.

Previous animal cruelty-related prosecutions have included an elderly couple who hoarded 92 Yorkshire Terrier and Yorkie-mix dogs in a feces-filled home in Poway and a 31-year-old Oceanside resident who received an eight-year prison sentence for torturing and killing at least 10 cats. The defendant adopted the cats from the San Diego Humane Society and through Craigslist, subjecting them to severe abuse. The case is known as one of the most severe instances of recent animal cruelty in the county.

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And in a case that's currently pending, defendant Debra Barkley, 68, has been charged with three misdemeanor counts for allowing her aggressive dogs to constantly run off her property and frighten neighbors. DAS documented 15 separate incidents involving the defendant's dogs over a two-year period, including at least one where a dog bit someone. Barkley failed to allow property inspections, secure liability insurance, register dogs as dangerous, and post "beware of dogs" signs. Barkley has a readiness hearing scheduled for tomorrow, March 28, in North County.

Other cases filed in the past year include a defendant who brutally killed the family chihuahua after becoming upset with his wife and children, an elderly couple hoarding 33 animals in their home, and a defendant who beat a nine-week-old puppy to death after becoming upset with the puppy's behavior.

In 2018, the DA launched the office's first-ever Animal Cruelty Prosecution Unit, which provides prosecutorial consistency countywide, investigative support and dedicated expertise for animal abuse cases. Since there is a strong link between animal abuse and violent crimes against people – particularly children and domestic violence – the unit resides within the DA's Family Protection Division. The unit works closely with police, Sheriff's deputies, DAS, animal control officers, the San Diego Humane Society, and others to investigate and prosecute animal cruelty cases vertically (one prosecutor handling the case from beginning to end.)

To report suspected animal abuse in San Diego County, you can contact the following agencies depending on the location and type of incident:

- **San Diego Humane Society** – They handle animal cruelty investigations in most of San Diego County, including the cities of San Diego, Escondido, Imperial Beach, Poway, Santee, and others.
  - Call: **619-299-7012 (ext. 2244)**
  - [Online: Report Animal Cruelty](#)
- **County of San Diego Department of Animal Services** – Covers unincorporated areas and certain contract cities.
  - Call: **619-767-2675**
  - [Online: County Animal Services](#)
- **Local Law Enforcement** – If an animal is in immediate danger, call **911** or your local police department.

The Osvaldo case is being prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Maura Duffey.

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#### **About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office**

*The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.*

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