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Humane Society of Berks County Denounces Light Sentence In Animal Cruelty Case

The Humane Society of Berks County, Berks County's leader in animal welfare, released a statement today denouncing the light sentence handed down in the Henry Stetler case involving the bludgeoning deaths of three cats.

"The Humane Society of Berks County is appalled that Judge Sprecher chose to hand down such a light sentence in this case. Mr. Stetler callously and willfully beat three cats and threw them out a window to their deaths in front of a witness. What more does a person have to do to get more than a slap on the wrist before this Judge?" said Humane Society Executive Director Karel Minor. Stetler received a sentence of two years probation, a \$1000 fine per animal, and 24 hours of community service for the crime, which occurred in front of an eye witness and resulted in a guilty plea by the defendant.

Assistant District Attorney Colleen Dugan sought at least symbolic jail time for Stetler, who could have received a maximum sentence of two years for each of the three counts of cruelty, to be served consecutively. "We applaud District Attorney Mark Baldwin and ADA Dugan's efforts to have Stetler receive at least some time in jail," said Minor. "Teenagers get more time for petty vandalism than Stetler received today in court. The message sent in court today was that you get in more trouble for smashing in a mailbox than the heads of three kittens."

The Humane Society of Berks County assisted the County in its investigation. Because the case involved a misdemeanor, the case was prosecuted through the District Attorney's Office.

The Humane Society of Berks County is a private, non-profit organization funded through donations and service fees. In addition to enforcing Pennsylvania's animal cruelty laws, the Humane Society offers adoption services, spay and neuter services, humane education, pet behavioral counseling, and helps stray, injured and mistreated animals. More information about the shelter may be found at www.berkshumane.org or by calling 610-921-2348. The Humane Society is located at 1801 N. 11th Street, Reading.

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