

Overcrowded Jails Lead to Quick Releases for Illegal Animal Vendors

By [ED FUENTES](#)

Published: Thursday, November 05, 2009, at 11:46PM



Robert Ferber, Head of the City Attorney's Animal Protection Unit.

DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES — A September raid on illegal animal sales in the Fashion District led to ten felony arrests, but overcrowding in Los Angeles' jail system means that those charged have avoided time behind bars and may not ever show up for prosecution.

One month after the raid, blogdowntown caught up with Robert Ferber, Head of the City Attorney's Animal Protection Unit, to get an update on how the cases were progressing.

Ferber said that prosecutors were convinced that bringing felony charges would make a difference in getting the high bail amounts necessary to see the charges through to trial.

Turns out, it didn't work. Bail was set at \$20,000, and in Los Angeles those with bails under \$25,000 are now released on their own recognizance because of overcrowded jails. Those releases occur without the person charged having to make bail, and often without any legitimate ID being shown.

Ferber said that makes it hard for a justice system to get anything done.