

AN ACT CONCERNING THE HUMANE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

(Draft Proposed Language)

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*)

(a) There is established a State Advisory Council on the Humane Treatment of Animals in Municipal Shelters. The council shall consider: (1) The establishment of standards for the humane treatment of animals; (2) education for animal control officers on current license laws; (3) rules and regulations regarding and penalties for abuse; (4) the development of a system to track persons who have been convicted of animal abuse in order to prevent such persons from acquiring animals from shelters in other municipalities or states; (5) the establishment of standards for shelters and rescue organizations to use when evaluating foster homes; (6) the establishment of rules and responsibilities for volunteer groups that work with municipal shelters and animal control officers; and (7) the creation of a framework to coordinate the efforts of local humane organizations with volunteer groups, foster groups and municipal animal shelters.

(b) In addition to the Commissioner of Agriculture or the commissioner's designee, the council shall consist of the following members:

(1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be a member of a local animal welfare advocacy organization and one whom shall be a sworn officer of a municipal police department;

(2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of whom shall be an animal control officer and one who shall be a representative of the judicial branch;

(3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, who shall be a chief elected official from a town with a population of more than twenty-five thousand persons;

(4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who shall be a licensed veterinarian;

(5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, who shall be a person who volunteers to work with municipal animal shelters and animal control officers; and

(6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who shall be a chief elected official from a town with a population of twenty-five thousand persons or less.

(c) Any member of the council appointed under subdivision (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member of the General Assembly.

(d) All appointments to the council shall be made not later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

(e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the council from among the members of the council. Such chairpersons shall schedule the first meeting of the council, which shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

(f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to local governments shall serve as administrative staff of the council

(g) Not later than January 1, 2017 and annually thereafter, the council shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to local governments and the environment, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

Section 2. Subsection (b) of section 22-332 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2016*)

(b) (1) If such dog or other animal is not claimed by and released to the owner within seven days after the date of publication, the municipal animal control officer, upon finding such dog or other animal to be in satisfactory health, may have a licensed veterinarian spay or neuter such dog and sell such dog or other animal to any person who satisfied such officer that she/he can give it a good home and proper care. The municipal animal control officer may retain possession of such dog or other animal for such additional period of time as she/he may deem advisable in order to place such dog or other animal as a pet and may have a licensed veterinarian spay or neuter such dog. If ~~within~~ after such period, any dog or other animal is not claimed by and released to the owner or keeper or purchased as a pet, the officer shall cause such dog or other animal to be ~~mercifully killed~~ euthanized by a licensed veterinarian ~~[or disposed of as the State Veterinarian may direct. Any veterinarian who so destroys a dog shall be paid from the dog fund account. No person who destroys a dog or other animal shall be held criminally or civilly liable therefor nor shall any licensed veterinarian who spays or neuters a dog pursuant to this section shall be held civilly liable, including but not limited to, liability for reconstructive nautical implantation surgery.], provided that no reasonable alternatives are available and the requirements of subdivision (2) of this subsection are met.~~

(2) Animal control officers shall ensure that the following conditions are met before a dog or other animal is euthanized: (A) the holding period for the dog or other animal required by this chapter has expired; (B) there are no empty cages, kennels or other living environments in the shelter that are suitable for the dog or other animal; (C) a foster home is not available; (D) no other animal rescue organization or regional municipal shelter with whom the animal control officer has a trusted relationship is able to take the dog or other animal; and (E) the animal control officer certifies that the above conditions are met and that such officer has no other reasonable alternative.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter to the contrary, a dog or other animal may be euthanized immediately if necessary to alleviate undue suffering or to protect shelter staff and/or other shelter animals from a dog or other animal's severe aggression or contagious deadly health condition. The determination of whether euthanasia is necessary pursuant to this subsection shall be made by a licensed veterinarian.

Section 3 (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2016*):

A state or municipal animal control officer shall ensure that all adoptable dogs and cats, as part of the adoption process, are spayed or neutered before the new adopter takes possession of the dog or cat, making use of the Animal Population Control Program state voucher system as needed. Spay or neuter surgery may take place after the newly adopted dog or cat leaves the animal shelter but before the animal is in the permanent possession of the adopter. Animals that, upon adoption, are too young or sick to undergo a sterilization procedure shall be granted an extension of time until the animal is mature or healthy enough to safely undergo the procedure.