

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Subject: Impounded domestic animals

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Overview

This bill would establish requirements for public and private animal shelters in the areas of animal holding, identification, care, killing, and reporting.

Section

- 1 Title.** Specifies the title of this bill.
- 2 Definitions.** Defines several key terms, including “animal,” “irremediably suffering animal,” “treatable animal,” “private sheltering agency,” “public sheltering agency,” and “stray animal.”
- 3 Stray animal holding periods.** Requires public and private shelters to hold stray animals for five business days, unless otherwise provided in this section. Exceptions to the five-day period include irremediably suffering animals (as determined by a veterinarian) which may be euthanized without delay and unweaned animals impounded without their mother, which may be killed after the shelter exhausts efforts to place the animal in foster care, performs an emergency appeal for adoption or transfer under section 6, and certifies that it is unable to care for and feed the unweaned animal.
- 4 Holding period; owner-relinquished animal.** Requires public and private shelters to hold owner-relinquished animals for three days for possible redemption unless the animal is adopted into a new home or transferred to a private sheltering agency or rescue group.
- 5 Animal care standards.** Establishes animal care standards that apply to all public and private sheltering agencies. These standards include fresh food and water, environmental enrichment, toys and treats, exercise, adherence to a care protocol for animals with special

Section

needs, adherence to a protocol to maintain a clean living environment, prompt and necessary veterinary care, and adherence to a protocol to prevent the spread of disease.

- 6 Additional programs and duties.** Requires public and private sheltering agencies that kill animals to maintain a registry of organizations willing to accept animals and specifies several required registry elements. Prevents public and private shelters from killing an animal until the shelter has notified or made a reasonable attempt to notify, at least 24 hours before killing the animal, all organizations on the registry that have indicated an interest in taking an animal of that type – exceptions are provided for irremediably suffering animals, dangerous dogs, and certain unweaned animals.
- 7 Identification.** Requires public and private sheltering agencies to ensure all animals are checked for identification, maintain continuously updated lists of animals reported lost, match the list against animals reported found or in the shelter, and post notice of all stray animals on the internet within 24 hours of impoundment. If a public or private sheltering agency identifies a possible owner, the agency must make a reasonable effort to notify the animal's owner or caretaker. If the owner or caretaker comes forward, the agencies must retain custody of the animals until the recovery process is complete.
- 8 Adoption or transfer criteria.** Prohibits public and private sheltering agencies from blocking or obstructing the adoption or transfer of any animal based on arbitrary criteria such as breed, age, color, or other criteria except a specific animal's medical condition and level of aggression or the potential adopter's fitness to adopt.
- 9 Killing animals.** Prohibits public and private shelters from killing any savable animal until specified conditions are met.
- 10 Method of killing.** Authorizes public and private shelters to kill animals only when necessary and only by lethal intravenous injection of sodium pentobarbital, with certain exceptions provided. Establishes other requirements pertaining to the act of killing an animal.
- 11 Public accountability.** Requires public and private shelters to post a sign where animals are relinquished by their owner. Specifies what information must be included on the sign. Requires shelters to create monthly and annual summary reports and make the reports available for public inspection. Specifies report components.
- 12 Enforcement.** Authorizes public and private sheltering agencies and rescue groups to compel performance of the requirements and prohibitions in this bill through legal action.
- 13 Effective date.** All sections are effective the day following final enactment.