

MINUTES
Pet Care & Humane Treatment Study Committee
Tuesday, April 4, 2017, 9:00 AM
Room 410, Blatt Building

Members Present: Senator Vincent Sheheen, Chairman
Representative Steve Moss
Patricia Hill, DVM, SC Assn. of Veterinarians, Past President
Marli Drum, City of Columbia
Kim Kelly, Humane Society US, SC Director
Barbara Nelson, SPCA Albrecht Center, President
Josh Rhodes, SC Assoc. of Counties, Staff Attorney
Patty Van Sicklen, Am. Kennel Club, Legislative Analyst (via conference)
Clint Leach, SC Dept. Of Agriculture, Asst. Commissioner

Staff Present: Senate -- Gene Hogan; House -- Joannie Nickel, Rebecca Thompson

Barbra Nelson addressed her proposal that focused on microchipping all dogs to identify vicious dogs and return pets to their owners faster, the purpose being to identify as many dogs as possible. She suggested removing the state from being the regulatory figure as each microchip is connected to a database.

Patty Van Sicklen pointed out that the microchip can sometimes be coded to the manufacturer. In that case, a vet/shelter would then contact the manufacturer to get the pet's information. Rep. Moss asked the cost of implantation of a microchip. It is roughly \$25. There was interest in capping the cost of microchipping to prevent gouging.

There was discussion of fines for failure to microchip. Josh Rhodes expressed concerns about where the fines will be collected; as local Animal Control would be administering the program, he suggested there. Others suggested that these fines could go towards education programs.

Rep. Moss stated that microchipping should be administered through the counties. Marli Drum advised that some counties already use microchips through their licensing programs, but that no counties in the state require microchipping.

Also regarding microchips, it was mentioned that a scanner is supplied to a microchip installer, that all dogs that come from the pound are already microchipped and Barbara Nelson stated that no states mandate microchipping. Chairman Sheheen summarized that the focus on microchip should be on the universal identification of dogs, a fine cap, a phase-in and an educational component.

There was a discussion of emergency veterinarians from other states. Pursuant to a suggested change in law from the State Veterinarian, Rebecca Leach (LLR) asked to consult with their general counsel and report the response.

Kim Kelly addressed her proposals regarding care in animal shelters and kennels. Areas of focus included kennel cleaning, vet care, types of animals and penalties. The Chairman expressed concern about legislation that would require expanded revenue to cover these areas. Patty Van Sicklen also expressed concern about standards that did not address unaltered male dogs being housed together.

Regarding tethering, the Chairman charged staff with preparing a comparative analysis of proposals and the Connecticut law, which is considered to be the best. Additionally, staff will continue to update the revised draft with agreed upon language and prepare a single document of proposed amendments yet to be considered by the whole committee.