**South Carolina General Assembly**

123rd Session, 2019-2020

**A43, R63, S105**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Senators Campbell, Sheheen, Verdin and Rankin

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Introduced in the Senate on January 8, 2019

Introduced in the House on April 2, 2019

Last Amended on May 8, 2019

Passed by the General Assembly on May 9, 2019

Governor's Action: May 16, 2019, Signed

Summary: Animal cruelty and care

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

Date Body Action Description with journal page number

12/12/2018 Senate Prefiled

12/12/2018 Senate Referred to Committee on **Agriculture and Natural Resources**

1/8/2019 Senate Introduced and read first time ([Senate Journal‑page 88](file:///h:\sj\20190108.docx))

1/8/2019 Senate Referred to Committee on **Agriculture and Natural Resources** ([Senate Journal‑page 88](file:///h:\sj\20190108.docx))

1/29/2019 Senate Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Agriculture and Natural Resources** ([Senate Journal‑page 12](file:///h:\sj\20190129.docx))

1/30/2019 Scrivener's error corrected

2/28/2019 Senate Committee Amendment Adopted ([Senate Journal‑page 18](file:///h:\sj\20190228.docx))

2/28/2019 Senate Amended ([Senate Journal‑page 18](file:///h:\sj\20190228.docx))

3/7/2019 Senate Amended ([Senate Journal‑page 18](file:///h:\sj\20190307.docx))

3/27/2019 Senate Amended ([Senate Journal‑page 43](file:///h:\sj\20190327.docx))

3/27/2019 Senate Read second time ([Senate Journal‑page 43](file:///h:\sj\20190327.docx))

3/27/2019 Senate Roll call Ayes‑38 Nays‑1 ([Senate Journal‑page 43](file:///h:\sj\20190327.docx))

3/28/2019 Senate Read third time and sent to House ([Senate Journal‑page 11](file:///h:\sj\20190328.docx))

3/28/2019 Scrivener's error corrected

4/2/2019 House Introduced and read first time ([House Journal‑page 2](file:///h:\hj\20190402.docx))

4/2/2019 House Referred to Committee on **Judiciary** ([House Journal‑page 2](file:///h:\hj\20190402.docx))

5/2/2019 House Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Judiciary** ([House Journal‑page 14](file:///h:\hj\20190502.docx))

5/8/2019 House Amended ([House Journal‑page 127](file:///h:\hj\20190508.docx))

5/8/2019 House Read second time ([House Journal‑page 127](file:///h:\hj\20190508.docx))

5/8/2019 House Roll call Yeas‑101 Nays‑0 ([House Journal‑page 129](file:///h:\hj\20190508.docx))

5/9/2019 House Read third time and returned to Senate with amendments ([House Journal‑page 130](file:///h:\hj\20190509.docx))

5/9/2019 Senate Concurred in House amendment and enrolled ([Senate Journal‑page 104](file:///h:\sj\20190509.docx))

5/13/2019 Ratified R 63

5/16/2019 Signed By Governor

5/31/2019 Effective date 05/16/19

6/5/2019 Act No.  43

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[12/12/2018](file:///p:\pprever\2019-20\105_20181212.docx)

[1/30/2019](file:///p:\pprever\2019-20\105_20190130.docx)

[2/28/2019](file:///p:\pprever\2019-20\105_20190228.docx)

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[5/8/2019](file:///p:\pprever\2019-20\105_20190508.docx)

(A43, R63, S105)

**AN ACT TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 47‑1‑225 SO AS TO REQUIRE THAT MAGISTRATES AND MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGES RECEIVE AT LEAST TWO HOURS OF INSTRUCTIONS ON ISSUES CONCERNING ANIMAL CRUELTY EVERY FOUR YEARS; TO AMEND SECTION 47‑3‑10, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS APPLICABLE TO DOMESTIC PETS, SO AS TO DEFINE THE TERM “LITTER”; TO AMEND SECTION 47‑3‑60, RELATING TO THE DISPOSITION OF IMPOUNDED ANIMALS, SO AS TO AUTHORIZE AN ANIMAL SHELTER TO TURN OVER A LITTER OF UNIDENTIFIABLE DOGS OR CATS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES; BY ADDING SECTION 47‑1‑145 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE CUSTODY AND CARE OF AN ANIMAL AFTER THE ARREST OF THE ANIMAL’S OWNER FOR CHARGES RELATED TO ANIMAL CRUELTY; TO AMEND SECTION 56‑3‑9600, RELATING TO THE SPECIAL FUND TO SUPPORT LOCAL ANIMAL SPAYING AND NEUTERING PROGRAMS, SO AS TO ESTABLISH CERTAIN PROCEDURES FOR THE AWARD OF GRANTS TO SPAYING AND NEUTERING PROGRAMS; TO AMEND SECTION 40‑69‑30, RELATING TO A LICENSE TO PRACTICE VETERINARY MEDICINE, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT A VETERINARIAN LICENSED IN ANOTHER JURISDICTION MAY OBTAIN AN EMERGENCY LIMITED LICENSE DURING AN EMERGENCY OR NATURAL DISASTER; TO AMEND SECTIONS 47‑3‑470, 47‑3‑480, AND 47‑3‑490, ALL RELATING TO THE STERILIZATION OF DOGS AND CATS, SO AS TO REMOVE REFERENCES TO “ANIMAL REFUGE” AND REPLACE IT WITH “RESCUE ORGANIZATION”.**

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

**Animal cruelty instruction for certain judges**

SECTION 1. Chapter 1, Title 47 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 47‑1‑225. Every four years, at their mandatory continuing legal education programs, magistrates and municipal court judges must receive at least two hours of instruction on issues concerning animal cruelty. The content of the continuing legal education must be determined by the South Carolina Court Administration at the direction of the Chief Justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court.”

**“Litter” defined**

SECTION 2. Section 47‑3‑10 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 47‑3‑10. For the purpose of this article:

(1) ‘Animal’ is defined as provided for in Chapter 1.

(2) ‘Animal shelter’ includes any premises designated by the county or municipal governing body for the purpose of impounding, care, adoption, or euthanasia of dogs and cats held under authority of this article.

(3) ‘Dog’ includes all members of the canine family, including foxes and other canines.

(a) A dog is deemed to be ‘running at large’ if off the premises of the owner or keeper and not under the physical control of the owner or keeper by means of a leash or other similar restraining device.

(b) A dog is deemed to be ‘under restraint’ if on the premises of its owner or keeper or if accompanied by its owner or keeper and under the physical control of the owner or keeper by means of a leash or other similar restraining device.

(4) ‘Cat’ includes all members of the feline family.

(5) ‘Litter’ means multiple offspring that are born at one time from the same mother.

(6) ‘Vicious dog’ means any dog evidencing an abnormal inclination to attack persons or animals without provocation.”

**Impounded animals, litter of dogs or cats may be turned over for life‑saving purposes**

SECTION 3. Section 47‑3‑60 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 47‑3‑60. (A) After any animal has been quarantined pursuant to South Carolina Rabies Control Act and is unclaimed by its owner, after the animal shelter employees have made a good faith effort to contact the identified owner as required by Section 47‑3‑540, the animal shelter employees, unless the animal must be kept pending disposition of a criminal or civil trial involving the animal or unless a hearing on the disposition of the animal is held prior to the trial, may dispose of the animal by adoption or by euthanasia or the animal may be turned over to any organization established for the purpose of caring for animals, such as the Humane Society.

(B) Notwithstanding subsection (C), a litter of unidentifiable dogs or cats four months of age or younger may be turned over to any organization established for the purpose of caring for animals immediately, so long as the litter is turned over for life‑saving purposes.

(C) After any animal has been impounded for five calendar days and is unclaimed by its owner, and after the animal shelter employees have made a good faith effort to contact the identified owner as required by Section 47‑3‑540, the animal shelter employees, unless the animal must be kept pending disposition of a criminal or civil trial involving the animal or unless a hearing on the disposition of the animal is held prior to the trial, may dispose of the animal by adoption or by euthanasia or the animal may be turned over to any organization established for the purpose of caring for animals, such as the Humane Society.

(D) Complete records must be kept by shelter officials as to the disposition of all animals impounded.”

**Animal cruelty, custody and care of animal after arrest**

SECTION 4. Chapter 1, Title 47 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 47‑1‑145. (A) Any person, organization, or other entity that is awarded custody of an animal under the provisions of Section 47‑1‑150 because of the arrest of a defendant for a violation of any provision of Chapter 1, Title 47 or Chapter 27, Title 16 and that provides services to the animal without compensation may file a petition with the court requesting that the defendant, if found guilty, be ordered to deposit funds in an amount sufficient to secure payment of all the reasonable expenses incurred by the custodian in caring for and providing for the animal pending the disposition of the litigation. In the absence of a conviction, the county or municipality making the arrest shall pay the reasonable expenses of the custodian. For purposes of this section, ‘court’ refers to municipal or magistrates court, and ‘reasonable expenses’ includes the cost of providing food, water, shelter, and care, including medical care, but does not include extraordinary medical procedures.

(B) The court shall, at the time of adjudication, determine the actual cost of care for the animal that the custodian incurred pursuant to subsection (A). Either party may demand that the trial be given priority over other cases.

(C)(1) If the court makes a final determination of the charges or claims against the defendant in his favor, then the defendant may recover custody of his animal.

(2) If the defendant is found guilty, then the custodian of the animal may then determine if the animal is suitable for adoption and if adoption can be arranged for the animal. The animal may not be adopted by the defendant or by any person residing in the defendant’s household if the defendant was found guilty. If no adoption can be arranged after the forfeiture or if the animal is unsuitable for adoption, then the custodian shall humanely euthanize the animal.

(D) Within thirty days of an animal’s impoundment, the animal’s custodian must provide a good faith estimate, pursuant to subsection (A), of the daily custodial cost of the impounded animal. Upon receipt of the good faith estimate, the court shall then issue a notice to the defendant about his impounded animal that includes:

(1) an estimate of the daily custodial costs required to care for the animal;

(2) a statement that the defendant, if found guilty, shall be required to pay for the animal’s care during impoundment; and

(3) a statement that the defendant, at any time prior to final adjudication, has the right to forfeit ownership of the animal and avoid all future custodial costs related to the animal’s care but not costs already accrued.

(E) The remedy provided for in this section is in addition to any other remedy provided by law.”

**Grants for spay and neuter programs**

SECTION 5. Section 56‑3‑9600(B) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(B)(1) Notwithstanding another provision of law, of the fees collected pursuant to this section, the Comptroller General shall place into the State Highway Fund as established by Section 57‑11‑20, to be distributed as provided in Section 11‑43‑167, an amount equal to the expenses of the Department of Motor Vehicles in producing and administering the special license plates. The remaining funds collected from the special motor vehicle license fee must be deposited in a special account, separate and apart from the general fund, designated for use by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture to support local animal spaying and neutering programs. The South Carolina Department of Agriculture may use up to ten percent of the fees deposited in the special account for the administration of the program. Local private nonprofit tax exempt organizations offering animal spaying and neutering programs may apply for grants from this fund to further their tax exempt purposes.

(2) An agency may apply for up to two thousand dollars per grant application at the beginning of each fiscal year and may apply for multiple grants during a fiscal year. Total available grant funds shall be based on the amount of funds collected each previous fiscal year. Grants must specify how many surgeries will be performed and the species and gender of the animals undergoing surgery. Agencies may only apply for one grant at a time. Once a grant is fulfilled, an agency may apply for another grant, provided that funds are available. Grants must be fulfilled within six months of receiving funds. Once grants are completed, agencies must submit to No More Homeless Pets / South Carolina Animal Care and Control Association (SCACCA) a report identifying each person participating; the basis of eligibility for the program; whether animals are being spayed or neutered; dates of spaying or neutering and of rabies vaccines if applicable; descriptions of animals, including gender; and the appropriate amount charged toward the grant. Any unused funds must be returned. If a copay was charged to participating individuals, then that amount must also be included. The Department of Agriculture shall encourage participation from Tier 3 and Tier 4 counties.

(3) SCACCA or its successor organization, on behalf of the tax exempt organizations, shall coordinate the grant program, make the request for reimbursement from the Department of Agriculture, and distribute the individual grants to the participating tax exempt organizations.”

**Veterinarian, emergency limited license**

SECTION 6. Section 40‑69‑30 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 40‑69‑30. (A) A person may not practice veterinary medicine without a license issued in accordance with this chapter, except as provided in subsection (B). A person who uses in connection with his name the words or letters ‘D.V.M.’, ‘V.M.D.’, ‘Doctor of Veterinary Medicine’, ‘Veterinary Medical Doctor’, or other letters, words, or insignia indicating or implying that one is engaged in the practice of veterinary medicine or who in any other way, orally or in writing or in print or by sign directly or by implication, represents oneself as engaged in the practice of veterinary medicine without being licensed by the board is subject to the penalties provided for in this chapter.

(B)(1) During an emergency or natural disaster, a veterinarian or veterinary technician who is not licensed in accordance with this chapter, but is licensed and in good standing in another jurisdiction, may obtain an emergency limited license to practice veterinary medicine related to the response efforts in locations in this State if:

(a) an official declaration of a state of emergency has been made by the Governor of this State or his delegated state official; and

(b) an official invitation has been extended to the veterinarian or veterinary technician for a specified time by the Governor during emergencies.

(2) An applicant for an emergency limited license must submit documentation as may be acceptable to the board under the circumstances to demonstrate eligibility for the limited license, including documentation of an existing license in good standing.”

**“Public or private rescue organization” defined**

SECTION 7. Section 47‑3‑470(3) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(3) ‘Public or private rescue organization’ means harborers of unwanted animals of any breed, including crossbreeds, who provide food, shelter, and confinement for a group of dogs, a group of cats, or a combination of dogs and cats.”

**Sterilization of dogs, public or private rescue organization**

SECTION 8. Section 47‑3‑480 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 47‑3‑480. (A) A public or private animal shelter, animal control agency operated by a political subdivision of this State, humane society, or public or private rescue organization shall make provisions for the sterilization of all dogs or cats acquired from the shelter, agency, society, or rescue organization by:

(1) providing sterilization by a licensed veterinarian before relinquishing custody of the animal; or

(2) entering into a written agreement with the person acquiring the animal guaranteeing that sterilization will be performed by a licensed veterinarian within thirty days after acquisition of a sexually mature animal or no later than six months of age except upon a written statement issued by a licensed veterinarian stating that such surgery would threaten the life of the animal.

(B) This section does not apply to a privately owned animal which the shelter, agency, society, or rescue organization may have in its possession for any reason if the owner of the animal claims or presents evidence that the animal is his property.

(C) All costs of sterilization pursuant to this section are the responsibility of the person acquiring the animal and, if performed before acquisition, may be included in the fees charged by the shelter, agency, society, or rescue organization for the animal.

(D) A person acquiring an animal from a shelter, an agency, a society, or a rescue organization which is not sterile at the time of acquisition shall submit to the shelter, agency, society, or rescue organization a signed statement from the licensed veterinarian performing the sterilization required by subsection (A) within seven days after sterilization attesting that the sterilization has been performed.”

**Forfeiture of animal to a rescue organization**

SECTION 9. Section 47‑3‑490 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 47‑3‑490. A person who fails to comply with Section 47‑3‑480(A)(2) or 47‑3‑480(D) must forfeit ownership of the dog(s) or cat(s) acquired from the shelter, agency, society, or rescue organization which adopted the animal to the owner. In addition to forfeiting ownership, the person who acquired the animal must pay to the shelter, agency, society, or rescue organization the sum of two hundred dollars as liquidated damages. Such remedies shall be in addition to any other legal or equitable remedies as may be available to the shelter, agency, society, or rescue organization for breach of the written agreement as provided for in Section 47‑3‑480(A)(2) or failure to comply with Section 47‑3‑480(D).”

**Findings**

SECTION 10. The General Assembly finds it is the best practice for a shelter, public or private, to prepare and maintain records documenting the number of animals admitted to the facility and the method by which those animals exit the facility, whether by adoption, fostering, natural death, euthanasia, transfer to another state, or other means of discharge.

**Time effective**

SECTION 11. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

Ratified the 13th day of May, 2019.

Approved the 16th day of May, 2019.

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