

1 AN ACT relating to animal care.

2 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

3 ➔SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 525 IS CREATED TO  
4 READ AS FOLLOWS:

5 *(1) As used in Sections 1 to 5 of this Act:*

6 *(a) "Animal control officer" has the same meaning as in KRS 258.095;*

7 *(b) "Animal cruelty law" means any state, county, or municipal law or*  
8 *ordinance enacted in Kentucky to prevent:*

9 *1. Cruelty to an animal;*

10 *2. Neglect of an animal;*

11 *3. Abandonment of an animal;*

12 *4. Sexual crimes against an animal; or*

13 *5. Animal fighting;*

14 *including but not limited to KRS 525.125, 525.130, 525.135, and 525.137;*

15 *(c) "Cost of care" means any reasonable expense incurred in the seizure or*  
16 *treatment of any animal, including transportation, food, medicine,*  
17 *boarding, shelter, and veterinary costs, including rabies vaccinations under*  
18 *KRS 258.015;*

19 *(d) "Owner" means every person having a right of property in an animal;*

20 *(e) "Seized animal" means any animal seized by a seizing agency and includes*  
21 *any offspring born of a seized animal while under the care of the seizing*  
22 *agency; and*

23 *(f) "Seizing agency" means the agency employing a peace officer or animal*  
24 *control officer who seizes an animal.*

25 *(2) As used in Sections 1 to 5 of this Act, "animal" does not include livestock or*  
26 *poultry, as those terms are defined in KRS 257.010, except that it shall include*  
27 *horses.*

1           ➔SECTION 2. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 525 IS CREATED TO  
2 READ AS FOLLOWS:

3 (1) Any law enforcement agency or animal control office may seize any animal  
4 whose owner is found in violation of any animal cruelty law.

5 (2) In addition to any penalty under any animal cruelty law and in addition to any  
6 penalty established under Sections 1 to 5 of this Act, any person whose animal is  
7 seized may be liable for the cost of care of the seized animal as established under  
8 Section 4 of this Act.

9 (3) In lieu of proceeding under Section 4 of this Act, an owner of any seized animal  
10 may voluntarily:

11 (a) Provide a payment mechanism as established by the seizing agency or the  
12 animal care facility that has care, custody, and control of the seized animal,  
13 or;

14 (b) Relinquish or transfer ownership of the seized animal to the seizing agency  
15 or an animal care facility that has care, custody, and control of the animal.

16 (4) The seizing agency or its designee shall have the authority to determine whether  
17 any animal seized under this chapter that is under its care, custody, or control is  
18 placed in a shelter, placed in foster care, or humanely euthanized in accordance  
19 with KRS 258.119(3)(b)2.

20           ➔SECTION 3. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 525 IS CREATED TO  
21 READ AS FOLLOWS:

22 When an animal is seized by a peace officer or animal control officer as part of the  
23 enforcement of an animal cruelty law, the seizing agency shall, within twenty-four (24)  
24 hours, serve notice of the seizure upon the owner of the animal in person or by affixing  
25 the notice in a conspicuous place where the animal was found. The owner's presence is  
26 not required for the seizure to take place. The notice shall:

27 (1) Advise of the seizure of the animal;

- 1 (2) Provide a description of the animal;
- 2 (3) Provide the authority for and purpose of the seizure, including the date, time, and  
3 place the animal was seized;
- 4 (4) Include the date the notice was served;
- 5 (5) Include a statement that the owner may be responsible for the reasonable cost of  
6 caring for the seized animal during the pendency of the criminal case or until the  
7 animal is relinquished, forfeited, or returned, whichever occurs first; and
- 8 (6) Include a declaration of ownership form, provided by the Administrative Office of  
9 the Courts, which shall:
- 10 (a) Include the contact information of the seizing agency;
- 11 (b) Provide for a declaration of ownership of the seized animal;
- 12 (c) Provide for an affirmation of intent to reclaim the animal or affirmation of  
13 intent to voluntarily relinquish ownership of the animal to the seizing  
14 agency;
- 15 (d) Collect the contact information of the owner, including name, address,  
16 email address, and phone number;
- 17 (e) Include a statement that the owner may be responsible for the reasonable  
18 cost of caring for the seized animal during the pendency of the criminal  
19 case or until the animal is relinquished, forfeited, or returned, whichever  
20 occurs first;
- 21 (f) Include a statement that the form must be returned to the seizing agency  
22 within five (5) days, exclusive of weekends and holidays, after the date of  
23 the notice or the seized animal shall be deemed abandoned and shall be  
24 forfeited to the seizing agency;
- 25 (g) Include information explaining the methods by which the form may be  
26 returned to the seizing agency; and
- 27 (h) Include a signature and date line for acknowledgement of receipt of the

1           declaration of ownership and understanding of the statements contained in  
2           the declaration.

3           ➔SECTION 4. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 525 IS CREATED TO  
4 READ AS FOLLOWS:

5       (1) (a) A seizing agency may petition a court of competent jurisdiction to require  
6           the owner of the seized animal to pay into court funds in an amount  
7           sufficient to secure payment of all reasonably anticipated costs related to the  
8           seizure and care of the animal if an owner has affirmed his or her intent to  
9           reclaim the seized animal by timely returning the declaration of ownership  
10           form as provided in Section 3 of this Act.

11       (b) Every petition filed under paragraph (a) of this subsection shall contain a  
12           description of the date, time, and place of the seizure, the legal authority for  
13           the seizure, and the name and address of the owner of the seized animal.  
14           The petition shall include proof of service of a seizure notice and a signed  
15           declaration of ownership form as provided in Section 3 of this Act.

16       (c) Notice of the petition shall be served upon the owner in accordance with the  
17           Kentucky Rules of Civil Procedure.

18       (2) (a) After notice of the petition is served, the court shall set a hearing on the  
19           petition to determine the need to care and provide for the seized animal  
20           pending the final disposition of the custody of the animal. The hearing shall  
21           be conducted no less than ten (10) days and no more than fifteen (15) days  
22           after notice of the hearing is served upon the owner. In lieu of a hearing  
23           under this paragraph, the owner of the seized animal shall have the option  
24           of voluntarily surrendering ownership of the animal to the seizing agency.

25       (b) At the hearing, the seizing agency shall have the burden of establishing  
26           probable cause that the seized animal was subjected to cruelty, neglect,  
27           abandonment, sexual contact, or animal fighting as defined by the relevant

- 1           animal cruelty law providing the basis for the seizure.
- 2           (c) 1. The owner may be represented by counsel, present evidence, and  
3           cross-examine witnesses. No evidence or statements from the owner  
4           submitted in the civil hearing shall be admissible in the criminal  
5           proceeding except for purposes of impeachment.
- 6           2. Voluntary forfeiture of an animal, or an order of forfeiture by the  
7           court in the civil hearing, shall not be admissible in the criminal  
8           proceeding except for purposes of sentencing upon conviction.
- 9           (d) Upon a showing of cruelty, neglect, abandonment, sexual contact, or  
10           animal fighting as required under paragraph (b) of this subsection, the  
11           court shall determine the cost of care for the seized animal. In determining  
12           the cost of care that is the responsibility of the owner, in no case shall the  
13           court consider the owner's ability to pay.
- 14           (e) Upon a determination of the cost of care for the seized animal, the court  
15           shall enter an order requiring payment into court through the pendency of  
16           the criminal proceeding, or until forfeiture or voluntary relinquishment  
17           occurs. The first payment shall be due no later than ten (10) days after the  
18           petition hearing occurs and shall encompass all cost of care expenses  
19           incurred up to and including the date of the order. Future payments shall  
20           be due as ordered by the court, not to exceed payments in excess of thirty  
21           (30) day increments, and shall continue unless altered by the court by  
22           subsequent order or until the earlier of:
- 23           1. An order of forfeiture is final and not appealable; or  
24           2. Voluntary relinquishment of the seized animal or animals.
- 25           (f) If the seizing agency fails to meet its burden, the seized animal shall be  
26           returned to the owner, and the owner shall not be required to pay for the  
27           animal's cost of care for the period of time the animal was in the custody of

1           the seizing agency or its designee.

2           (g) The seizing agency, or its designee, shall be eligible to draw funds paid into  
3           court to reimburse its actual costs incurred for caring for the seized animal  
4           upon submission of a request to the clerk of the court.

5           (h) If actual costs exceed the amount deposited into court, the seizing agency  
6           may petition the court to require the owner to pay additional funds into  
7           court.

8           (i) If unused funds remain after the final disposition of the custody of the  
9           animal, the unused funds shall be returned to the owner.

10          (j) The court may request an accounting from the seizing agency or its  
11          designee at any time.

12          (k) If an owner of a seized animal fails to appear at any hearing or to make a  
13          payment pursuant to the court's order under this subsection, the animal  
14          shall be forfeited to the seizing agency as a matter of law.

15          (3) If an owner of a seized animal is found not guilty of the alleged charges, or if the  
16          case is dismissed by the court, the owner of the seized animal shall not be  
17          required to pay for the animal's cost of care for the period of time the animal was  
18          in the custody of the seizing agency or its designee, and the court may order the  
19          seizing authority to reimburse the owner of the seized animal for any costs the  
20          owner has paid.

21          ➔SECTION 5. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 525 IS CREATED TO  
22 READ AS FOLLOWS:

23          (1) Except as provided in KRS 525.137, upon conviction for a violation of any felony  
24          offense related to animal cruelty, the court, in addition to any other penalty,  
25          shall:

26          (a) Order forfeiture of the seized animal or animals the conviction is based on,  
27          with custody given to the seizing agency, or its designee;

1       **(b) Order the defendant, if he or she has not already done so, to reimburse the**  
2       **seizing agency, or its designee, for the cost of care for the seized animal or**  
3       **animals from the date of seizure until the disposition of the criminal**  
4       **proceeding;**

5       **(c) Order that the defendant shall be prohibited, for a minimum period of five**  
6       **(5) years after completion of the imposed sentence, from:**

7               **1. Harboring;**

8               **2. Owning;**

9               **3. Possessing;**

10              **4. Exercising control over;**

11              **5. Residing in a household with; or**

12              **6. Working or volunteering in a place where he or she has unsupervised**  
13              **access to;**

14              **any animal;**

15       **(d) Order the defendant to attend an appropriate treatment program or obtain**  
16       **psychiatric or psychological counseling, at the defendant's expense; and**

17       **(e) Impose any other reasonable restrictions on the defendant's custody,**  
18       **control, or unsupervised access of animals as the court deems necessary for**  
19       **the protection of the animals.**

20       **(2) Upon conviction for any misdemeanor offense related to animal cruelty, the**  
21       **court, in addition to any other penalty, may order any of the conditions set forth**  
22       **in subsection (1) of this section.**

23       ➔Section 6. KRS 258.215 is amended to read as follows:

24       (1) Peace officers or animal control officers shall seize and impound any dog which  
25       does not bear a valid rabies tag or other legible identification which is found  
26       running at large. Any dog which an officer or animal control officer seizes shall be  
27       impounded in the designated animal shelter of the county and confined in a humane

1 manner. If, after a reasonable effort, the seizure of an unrestrained dog cannot be  
2 made, or the dog presents a hazard to public safety or property or has an injury or  
3 physical condition which causes the dog to suffer, the animal control officer or  
4 peace officer may immediately destroy the dog by the most reasonable and humane  
5 means then available.

6 (2) (a) Impounded dogs shall be kept for not less than five (5) days, unless reclaimed  
7 by their owners. Dogs not reclaimed and those not placed in suitable new  
8 homes may be humanely euthanized after the five (5) day holding period,  
9 unless the dog has an injury or physical condition which causes it to suffer. In  
10 those cases the animal shelter may immediately euthanize the dog, and if a  
11 human being has been bitten by the dog, the dog shall be tested for rabies.

12 (b) If an owner is identified, the impounding agency shall immediately notify the  
13 owner of the impoundment by the most expedient means available.

14 (c) Any animal shelter, public or private, which takes in stray animals and does  
15 not have regular hours for public access, shall post semimonthly either in a  
16 local newspaper or the newspaper with the highest circulation in the county,  
17 the shelter location, hours of operation, the period that impounded animals  
18 shall be held, and a contact number.

19 (3) Upon reclaiming an impounded dog, cat, or ferret, the owner shall show proof of a  
20 valid rabies vaccination. If proof of the vaccination cannot be provided, the owner  
21 shall purchase a vaccination voucher from the animal shelter. The voucher shall be  
22 valid for ten (10) days from the date of issuance and shall be used in the prescribed  
23 time period. The animal shelter shall reimburse the veterinarian for the amount of  
24 the voucher upon presentation to the shelter by the administering veterinarian.

25 (4) (a) The owner of an impounded animal is responsible for all fees associated with  
26 the impoundment of the animal. If the owner can be identified, the fees are  
27 due even if the owner does not reclaim the animal.



1       **(b) The owner of an impounded animal is responsible for the cost of care as**  
2       **defined in Section 1 of this Act. If the owner can be identified, the cost of**  
3       **care shall be paid by the owner to the animal shelter, even if the owner does**  
4       **not reclaim the animal.**

5       (5) Dogs, cats, or ferrets which have bitten a person shall be maintained in quarantine  
6       by the owner for ten (10) days from the date of the bite. Owners who fail to  
7       properly quarantine their animals shall be subject to a citation for violation of this  
8       subsection and the dog, cat, or ferret shall be removed to the animal shelter for the  
9       remainder of the quarantine period. The owner shall be responsible for all  
10      associated fees of the quarantine and impoundment.

11     (6) A hound or other hunting dog which has been released from confinement for  
12      hunting purposes shall be deemed to be under reasonable control of its owner or  
13      handler while engaged in or returning from hunting, and, if a hunting dog becomes  
14      temporarily lost from a pack or wanders from actual control or sight of its owner or  
15      handler, the owner or handler shall not be deemed to be in violation of the  
16      provisions of this section as a result of the dog's having become temporarily lost or  
17      having wandered from immediate control or sight of the owner or handler.

18      ➔Section 7. KRS 258.117 is repealed, reenacted, and amended to read as follows:

19     (1) The Animal Control Advisory Board is hereby created for the purposes of  
20      evaluating applications for and reviewing disbursements from the animal control  
21      and care fund, creating training programs, and other duties relating to animal  
22      control and care in the counties of the Commonwealth. The Animal Control  
23      Advisory Board shall promulgate administrative regulations to carry out the  
24      provisions of this section.

25     (2) The advisory board shall be attached to the Kentucky Department of Agriculture for  
26      administrative purposes.

27     (3) The advisory board shall be composed of the following members appointed by the

1 Governor as specified:

2 (a) One (1) member~~[Two (2) members]~~ selected from a list of three (3) submitted  
3 by the Kentucky Animal Control Association;

4 (b) One (1) member~~[Two (2) members]~~ selected from a list of three (3) submitted  
5 by the Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association;

6 (c) One (1) member selected from a list of three (3) representatives of registered  
7 nonprofit organizations, whose missions prioritize spay and neuter advocacy  
8 for companion animals, submitted by the Kentucky Veterinary Medical  
9 Association;

10 ~~(d)~~~~(e)~~ One (1) member~~[Two (2) members]~~ selected from a list of three (3)  
11 submitted by the Kentucky Farm Bureau;

12 ~~(e)~~~~(d)~~ One (1) member~~[Two (2) members]~~ selected from a list of three (3)  
13 submitted by the Kentucky Association of Counties;

14 ~~(f)~~~~(e)~~ One (1) member~~[Two (2) members]~~ selected from a list of three (3)  
15 submitted by the Kentucky Houndsmen Association;~~and~~

16 ~~(g)~~~~(f)~~ One (1) member~~[Two (2) members]~~ selected from a list of three (3)  
17 submitted by the Kentucky League of Cities; and

18 (h) One (1) member selected from a list of three (3) submitted by Kentucky  
19 Animal Action.

20 (4) Appointed members shall serve for a term of four (4) years. Vacancies shall be  
21 filled in the same manner as the original appointment for the unexpired portion of  
22 the term.

23 (5) Members of the advisory board shall receive one hundred dollars (\$100) per day for  
24 attendance at meetings and shall be entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred  
25 for travel. No per diem or travel expenses shall be paid except for meetings of the  
26 full advisory board.

27 (6) The advisory board shall elect one (1) of its members to serve as chair for a term of

1 two (2) years.

2 (7) The advisory board shall meet quarterly or upon the call of the chair.

3 ➔Section 8. On the effective date of this Act, the Animal Control Advisory Board  
4 shall be dissolved and reconstituted, and all new members shall be appointed pursuant to  
5 the requirements of Section 7 of this Act.

6 ➔Section 9. The initial appointments made after the effective date of this Act  
7 shall be staggered so that the appointments from subsections (3)(c) and (d) of Section 7  
8 of this Act shall expire at two years and appointments from subsections (3)(e) and (g) of  
9 Section 7 of this Act shall expire at three years from the dates of initial appointment.