

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2024 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 5146**

By Delegates Mallow, Winzenreid, Sheedy, Adkins,  
and Heckert

[Introduced January 25, 2024; Referred to the  
Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources  
then Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section  
 2 designated §7-10-1a; to amend and reenact §7-10-2 and §7-10-4 of said code; to amend  
 3 said code by adding thereto two new sections, designated §19-20-12a and §19-20-27; to  
 4 amend and reenact §19-20-22 and §19-20-26; to amend and reenact §61-8-19 of said  
 5 code; and to amend said code by adding thereto two new sections, designated §61-8-19d  
 6 and §61-8-19e, all relating generally to providing increased protections for the welfare of  
 7 domestic animals; requiring facilities for the care of stray, abandoned, and surrendered  
 8 animals and providing for access by the public; defining terms; updating the duties of  
 9 humane officers; defining an owner’s duty of care for companion animals; requiring an  
 10 owner to confine unspayed female dogs in estrus; requiring dog breeders to provide written  
 11 disclosures to purchasers; specifying minimum levels of care to be provided by dog  
 12 breeders; defining when a dog is unfit for sale by a dog breeder and providing remedies  
 13 therefor; increasing the penalty for a second offence of cruelty to animals; defining the  
 14 criminal offenses of unlawful confinement of domestic animals and hoarding of animals;  
 15 establishing criminal penalties; and providing for mental health treatment in certain  
 16 circumstances involving hoarding of animals.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**CHAPTER 7. COUNTY COMMISSIONS AND OFFICERS.**

**ARTICLE 10. HUMANE OFFICERS.**

**§7-10-1a. Definitions.**

1 As used in this article,

2 (a) "Humane officer" means a person designated pursuant to §7-10-1 of this code to  
 3 investigate complaints of cruel or inhumane treatment of animals and enforce laws related to the  
 4 prevention of cruelty to animals.

5 (b) "Primary Enclosure" means structure or device used to restrict an animal to a limited

6 amount of space, such as a room, pen, run, cage, compartment, kennel, or hutch, where an animal  
7 will sleep, eat, and spend the majority of its time.

8 (c) "Temporary Enclosure" means a cage or crate designed for short-term, temporary  
9 confinement or travel (e.g., airline crates, transport carriers, etc.); dogs and cats may be housed in  
10 temporary enclosures for no longer than 48 hours after being taken into custody by an animal  
11 shelter.

**§7-10-2. Duty of humane officers; reporting requirement when abuse or neglect of individuals suspected; prohibition against interference with humane officers; penalties.**

1 (a) Humane officers shall prevent the perpetration or continuance of any act of cruelty upon  
2 any animal and investigate and, upon probable cause, cause the arrest and assist in the  
3 prosecution of any person engaging in such cruel and forbidden practices. Upon reasonable  
4 cause, and, as provided by law, such officers have the right to access and inspect records and  
5 property reasonably necessary to any investigation. Humane officers also have the duty to enforce  
6 the provisions of §7-10-6 of this code.

7 (b) Whenever a humane officer, pursuant to an investigation of animal cruelty, forms a  
8 reasonable suspicion that a minor child, or incapacitated or elderly person, is the victim of abuse or  
9 neglect or has a suspicion of domestic violence, he or she shall report the suspicion and the  
10 grounds for the suspicion. In the event of suspected child abuse or neglect, the humane officer  
11 shall report to the local child protective services agency of the Department of Health and Human  
12 Resources in accordance with the provisions of §49-2-809 of this code. In the event of suspected  
13 abuse or neglect of an incapacitated or elderly person, he or she shall report to the department's  
14 local adult protective services agency in accordance with the provisions of §9-6-11 of this code. In  
15 the event of suspected domestic violence, he or she shall report to the State Police in accordance  
16 with the provisions of §48-27-101 *et seq.* of this code.

17 (c) Any person who interferes with, obstructs or resists any humane officer in the discharge

18 of his or her duty is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less  
19 than ~~\$100~~ \$500 nor more than ~~\$500~~ \$1,000 or confined in jail not more than 30 days, or both fined  
20 and confined. Any penalties imposed for a violation of this subsection shall be imposed in addition  
21 to any penalties the person incurs for cruel or inhumane treatment of any animal.

**§7-10-4. Custody and care of animals abandoned, neglected or cruelly treated; hearing;  
bonds; liability for costs; liens; exclusions.**

1 (a) Subject to the provisions of subsection (h) of this section, a humane officer shall take  
2 possession of any animal, including birds or wildlife in captivity, known or believed to be  
3 abandoned, neglected, deprived of necessary sustenance, shelter, medical care or reasonable  
4 protection from fatal freezing or heat exhaustion or cruelly treated or used as defined in §61-8-19  
5 and §61-8-19a of this code.

6 (b) The owner or persons in possession, if his or her identity and residence are known, of  
7 any animal seized pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall be provided written notice of the  
8 seizure, his or her liability for the cost and care of the animal seized as provided in this section and  
9 the right to request a hearing in writing before a magistrate in the county where the animal was  
10 seized. The magistrate court shall schedule any hearing requested within 10 working days of the  
11 receipt of the request. The failure of an owner or person in possession to request a hearing within  
12 five working days of the seizure is prima facie evidence of the abandonment of the animal. At the  
13 hearing, if requested, the magistrate shall determine by a preponderance of the evidence if the  
14 animal was abandoned, neglected or deprived of necessary sustenance, shelter, medical care or  
15 reasonable protection from fatal freezing or heat exhaustion or otherwise treated or used cruelly  
16 as set forth in this section.

17 (c) (1) If a hearing is requested and the magistrate finds by a preponderance of the  
18 evidence that the owner did abandon, neglect or cruelly treat the animal, or if no hearing is  
19 requested and the magistrate finds by a preponderance of the evidence, based upon the affidavit  
20 of the humane officer, that the owner did abandon, neglect or cruelly treat the animal, the

21 magistrate shall enter an order awarding custody of the animal to any humane officer for further  
22 disposition in accordance with reasonable practices for the humane treatment of animals. After  
23 hearing the evidence, if the magistrate is not convinced the animal was neglected or cruelly  
24 treated, he or she may dismiss the action and order the animal be returned to the owner. If the  
25 magistrate finds in favor of the humane officer, the owner of the animal shall post a bond with the  
26 court in an amount sufficient to provide for the reasonable costs of care, medical treatment and  
27 provisions for the animal for at least 30 days. The bond shall be filed with the court within five days  
28 following the court's finding against the owner. At the end of the time for which expenses are  
29 covered by the original bond if the animal remains in the care of the humane officer and the owner  
30 desires to prevent disposition of the animal by the humane officer, the owner shall post an  
31 additional bond with the court within five days of the expiration of the original bond. During this  
32 period the humane officer is authorized to place the animal in a safe private home or other safe  
33 private setting in lieu of retaining the animal in an animal shelter. The person whose animal is  
34 seized is liable for all costs of the care of the seized animal.

35 (2) If a bond has been posted in accordance with subdivision (1) of this subsection, the  
36 custodial animal care agency may draw from the bond the actual reasonable costs incurred by the  
37 agency in providing care, medical treatment and provisions to the impounded animal from the date  
38 of the initial impoundment to the date of the final disposition of the animal.

39 (d) Any person whose animal is seized and against whom the magistrate enters a finding  
40 pursuant to this section is liable during any period it remains in the possession of the humane  
41 officer for the reasonable costs of care, medical treatment and provisions for the animal not  
42 covered by the posting of the bond as provided in subdivision (1), subsection (c) of this section.  
43 The magistrate shall require the person liable for these costs to post bond to provide for the  
44 maintenance of the seized animal. This expense, if any, becomes a lien on the animal and must be  
45 discharged before the animal is released to the owner. Upon dismissal or withdrawal of the  
46 complaint, any unused portion of posted bonds shall be returned to the owner. Upon a finding in

47 favor of the humane officer, all interest in the impounded animal shall transfer to the humane  
48 officer for disposition in accordance with reasonable practices for the humane treatment of  
49 animals. Any additional expense above the value of the animal may be recovered by the humane  
50 officer or custodial agency.

51 (e) After the humane officer takes possession of the animal pursuant to a finding by a  
52 magistrate that the animal has been abandoned, neglected or cruelly treated and a licensed  
53 veterinarian determines that the animal should be humanely destroyed to end its suffering, the  
54 veterinarian may order the animal to be humanely destroyed and neither the humane officer,  
55 animal euthanasia technician nor the veterinarian is subject to any civil or criminal liability as a  
56 result of the action.

57 (f) (1) The term "humanely destroyed" as used in this section means:

58 (A) Humane euthanasia of an animal by hypodermic injection by a licensed veterinarian or  
59 by an animal euthanasia technician certified in accordance with the provisions of §30-10A-1 *et*  
60 *seq.* of this code; or

61 (B) Any other humane euthanasia procedure approved by the American Veterinary  
62 Medical Association, the Humane Society of the United States or the American Humane  
63 Association.

64 (2) The term "humanely destroyed" does not include euthanizing an animal by means of a  
65 gas chamber. *Provided*, That any county which has a gas chamber in operation as of the effective  
66 date of this section may continue to operate the gas chamber subject to the following: (1) The gas  
67 chamber shall be operated by an animal euthanasia technician certified pursuant to article ten-a,  
68 chapter thirty of this code; and (2) the gas chamber shall have been manufactured and installed by  
69 a person who regularly manufactures and installs gas chambers. The Board of Veterinary  
70 Medicine shall promulgate emergency rules regarding the inspection of gas chambers, pursuant  
71 to section fifteen, article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code.

72 (g) In case of an emergency in which an animal cannot be humanely destroyed in an

73 expeditious manner, an animal may be destroyed by shooting if:

74 (1) The shooting is performed by someone trained in the use of firearms with a weapon and  
 75 ammunition of suitable caliber and other characteristics designed to produce instantaneous death  
 76 by a single shot; and

77 (2) Maximum precaution is taken to minimize the animal's suffering and to protect other  
 78 persons and animals.

79 (h) The provisions of this section do not apply to farm livestock, as defined in §19-10B-2(d)  
 80 of this code; poultry, gaming fowl or wildlife kept in private or licensed game farms if kept and  
 81 maintained according to usual and accepted standards of livestock; poultry, gaming fowl, wildlife  
 82 or game farm production and management; nor to the humane use of animals or activities  
 83 regulated under and in conformity with the provisions of 7 U.S.C. § 2131, *et seq.*, and the  
 84 regulations promulgated thereunder.

85 (i) All persons or entities in the state performing euthanasia under this article shall register  
 86 with the board of Veterinary Medicine by December 31, 2009, in a manner to be prescribed by the  
 87 board. The Board of Veterinary Medicine shall ~~promulgate emergency rules~~ propose rules for  
 88 legislative approval relating to the registration of those performing animal euthanasia, pursuant to  
 89 §29A-3-15 of this code.

## CHAPTER 19. AGRICULTURE.

### ARTICLE 20. DOGS AND CATS.

#### §19-20-12a. Owner's duty of care of companion animals.

1 (a) As used in this section:

2 "Adequate care" or "care" means the responsible practice of good animal husbandry,  
 3 handling, management, confinement, feeding, watering, protection, shelter, transportation,  
 4 treatment, and when necessary, euthanasia, appropriate for the age, species, condition, size, and  
 5 type of the animal and the provision of veterinary care when needed to prevent suffering or

6 impairment of health;

7 "Adequate exercise" or "exercise" means the opportunity for the animal to move sufficiently  
8 to maintain normal muscle tone and mass for the age, species, size, and condition of the animal, in  
9 order to promote good physical and psychological health;

10 "Adequate feed" mean access to and the provision of food that is of sufficient quantity and  
11 nutritive value to maintain each animal in good health; is accessible to each animal; is prepared so  
12 as to permit ease of consumption for the age, species, condition, size and type of each animal, is  
13 provided in a clean and sanitary manner; is placed so as to minimize contamination from  
14 excrement and pests; and is provided at suitable levels for the species, age and condition of the  
15 animal, at least once daily, except as otherwise prescribed by a veterinarian or as dictated by  
16 naturally occurring states of hibernation or fasting for that species;

17 "Adequate shelter" means provision of and access to shelter that is suitable for the  
18 species, age, condition, and age of each animal; provides adequate space for each animal, is safe  
19 and protects each animal from injury, rain, sleet, snow, hail, direct sunlight, adverse effect of heat  
20 or cold, physical suffering, and impairment of health; is properly lighted to provide a regular diurnal  
21 cycle and to allow observation of the physical condition of the animal; is properly cleaned by  
22 regular removal of excreta and food waste; enables each animal to be clean and dry, except when  
23 detrimental to the species; is properly shaded during hot weather and does not readily conduct  
24 heat; has a windbreak at its entrance during cold weather and provides a sufficient quantity of  
25 bedding material to protect the animal from cold and to promote the retention of body heat; and for  
26 dogs and cats, provides a solid surface, resting platform, pad, floormat, or similar device that is  
27 large enough for the animal to lie upon in a normal manner and can be maintained in a sanitary  
28 condition;

29 "Adequate space" means sufficient space to allow each animal to: (1) Easily stand, sit, lie,  
30 turn around, and make all other normal body movements in a comfortable, normal position for the  
31 animal; and (2) interact safely with other animals in the enclosure. When freedom of movement

32 would endanger the animal, then temporary, appropriate restraints or confinement are permitted  
 33 within the meaning of "adequate space" according to professionally accepted standard of care and  
 34 treatment; and

35 "Adequate water" means provision of and access to clean, fresh, potable water of a  
 36 drinkable temperature, accessible at all times, and provided in an appropriate manner and amount  
 37 sufficient to the animal's needs.

38 (b) Each owner shall provide the following for each of his or her companion animals:

39 (1) Adequate feed;

40 (2) Adequate water;

41 (3) Adequate shelter that is clean;

42 (4) Adequate space in the primary enclosure for the particular animal depending upon its  
 43 age, size, species, and weight;

44 (5) Adequate exercise;

45 (6) Adequate care, treatment, and transportation; and

46 (7) Veterinary care when needed to prevent suffering or disease transmission.

47 (c) Shelters with wire, grid, or slat floor must not permit the animals' feet to pass through  
 48 the openings, sag under the animals' weight, or otherwise allow the animals' feet or toes to be  
 49 injured. Shelters and animal enclosures must have sufficient drainage to remove standing water.

**§19-20-22. ~~Confinement of female dogs~~ Confinement of unspayed female dogs in estrus.**

1 Every person owning or harboring a female dog, whether licensed or unlicensed, which  
 2 has not been spayed shall keep such dog confined in a building or secure enclosure for 25 days  
 3 during the period of estrus.

**§19-20-26. Commercial dog-breeding operations.**

1 (a) As used in this section:

2 (1) "Advertisement" means any media used to promote the sale of dogs including, but not  
 3 limited to, the Internet, newspapers, flyers, magazines, radio, television, bulletins and signs.

4 (2) "Commercial dog breeder" means any person who:

5 (A) Maintains 11 or more unsterilized dogs over the age of one year for the exclusive  
6 purpose of actively breeding;

7 (B) Is engaged in the business of breeding dogs as household pets for direct or indirect  
8 sale or for exchange in return for consideration; and

9 (C) Commercial dog breeder shall not include:

10 (i) Any person who keeps or breeds dogs exclusively for the purpose of herding or  
11 guarding livestock or farm animals, hunting, tracking or exhibiting in dog shows, performance  
12 events or field and obedience trials; and

13 (ii) With respect to greyhound dogs only, any person who holds an occupational permit  
14 from, and has registered a greyhound kennel name with, the West Virginia Racing Commission.

15 (3) "Class I Commercial Dog Breeder" means a commercial dog breeder that possesses  
16 11 to 30 unsterilized dogs over the age of one year at any one time for the exclusive purpose of  
17 actively breeding.

18 (4) "Class II Commercial Dog Breeder" means a commercial dog breeder that possesses  
19 more than 30 unsterilized dogs over the age of one year at any time.

20 (5) "Clinically ill" means an illness that is apparent to a veterinarian based on observation,  
21 examination, or testing of the dog, or upon a review of the medical records relating to the dog;

22 ~~(5)~~ (6) "Housing facility" means a structure in which dogs are kept that provides them with  
23 shelter, protection from the elements and protection from temperature extremes.

24 (7) "Nonelective surgical procedure" means a surgical procedure that is necessary to  
25 preserve or restore the health of the dog, to prevent the dog from experiencing pain or discomfort,  
26 or to correct a condition that would otherwise interfere with the dog's ability to walk, run, jump, or  
27 otherwise function in a normal manner;

28 ~~(6)~~ (8) "Primary enclosure" means a structure that restricts a dog's ability to move in a  
29 limited amount of space, such as a room, cage or compartment.

30 (b) No commercial dog breeder may breed dogs without a business registration certificate  
31 in accordance with §11-12-3 of this code and a valid business license issued by the locality in  
32 which the dog breeding operation is located, if the locality so requires.

33 (c) A commercial dog breeder shall:

34 (1) Obtain a permit annually to operate, as required by the county commission in which the  
35 commercial dog breeding operation is located. County commissions are authorized to charge a  
36 fee to commercial dog breeders and shall deposit the fees collected in a specially designated  
37 account to be used for animal shelters, animal rescue and spay neuter programs administered by  
38 county animal shelters or other humane organizations. The fee for a Class I commercial dog-  
39 breeding permit shall be an amount determined by the county commission, not to exceed ~~\$250~~  
40 \$350 per year. The fee for a Class II commercial dog breeding permit shall be an amount  
41 determined by the county commission, not to exceed ~~\$500~~ \$750 per year;

42 (2) Breed female dogs only after the breeder has obtained an annual certification by a  
43 licensed veterinarian that the dog is in suitable health for breeding;

44 (3) Dispose of dogs only by ~~gift~~, sale, transfer, ~~barter~~ or euthanasia by a licensed  
45 veterinarian;

46 (4) Maintain current, valid rabies certificates for every dog pursuant to §19-20A-1 *et seq.* of  
47 this code;

48 (5) Include the breeder's annual permit number on any advertisement for the sale of a dog;

49 (6) If selling directly to the public, post a conspicuous notice containing the breeder's  
50 name, address and annual permit number on each cage;

51 (7) Deliver to each purchaser of a dog a written disclosure containing all of the following:

52 (A) The breeder's name and address and, if the breeder is a dealer licensed by the United  
53 States Department of Agriculture, the federal dealer identification number;

54 (B) The date of the dog's birth and the date the breeder received the dog: *Provided*, That if  
55 the dog is not advertised or sold as purebred, registered, or registerable, the date of birth may be

56 approximated if not known by the breeder;

57 (C) The breed, sex, color, and identifying marks at the time of sale, if any, and if the breed is  
58 unknown or mixed, the record shall so indicate;

59 (D) If the dog is from a United States Department of Agriculture licensed source, the  
60 individual identifying, tag, tattoo, or collar number for that dog.

61 (E) If the dog is being sold as capable of registration, the names and registration numbers  
62 of the sire and dam and the litter number if known;

63 (F) A record of inoculations and worming treatments administered, if any, to the dog as of  
64 the time of the sale, including dates of administration and the type of vaccine or worming  
65 treatment;

66 (G) A record of any veterinarian treatment or medication received by the dog while in the  
67 possession of the breeder and either of the following:

68 (i) A statement signed by the breeder at the time of sale that the dog has no known disease  
69 or illness and that the dog has no congenital or hereditary condition that adversely affects the  
70 health of the dog at the time of sale or that is likely to adversely affect the health of the dog in the  
71 future; or

72 (ii) A record of any known disease, illness, or congenital or hereditary condition that  
73 adversely affects the health of the dog at the time of sale, or that is likely to adversely affect the  
74 health of the dog in the future, along with a statement signed by a veterinarian licensed in the state  
75 of West Virginia that authorizes the sale of the dog, recommends necessary treatment, if any, and  
76 verifies that the disease, illness, or condition does not require hospitalization or nonelective  
77 surgical procedures in the future. A veterinarian statement is not required for intestinal or external  
78 parasites unless their presence makes the dog clinically ill or is likely to make the dog clinically ill.  
79 The statement is valid for seven days following examination of the dog by the veterinarian; and

80 (H) The written disclosure made pursuant to this subsection shall be signed by both the  
81 breeder certifying the accuracy of the statement and by the purchaser of the dog acknowledging

82 receipt of the statement.

83 (8) Maintain a written record on the health, status, and disposition of each dog for a period  
84 of not less than one year after disposition of the dog, which record shall include all information that  
85 the breeder is required to disclose pursuant to subdivision (c)(7) of this section;

86 ~~(7)~~ (9) Provide for the humane treatment of dogs in accordance with §61-8-19 of this code;

87 ~~(8)~~ (10) Provide dogs with easy and convenient access to adequate amounts of clean food  
88 and water. Food and water receptacles must be ~~regularly~~ cleaned and sanitized daily. All  
89 enclosures must contain potable water that is not frozen, is substantially free from debris and is  
90 readily accessible to all dogs in the enclosure at all times unless otherwise directed by a  
91 veterinarian for the health of the dog;

92 ~~(9)~~ (11) Provide veterinary care without delay when necessary;

93 ~~(10)~~ (12) Maintain adequate staffing levels to ensure compliance with this section; and

94 ~~(11)~~ (13) Maintain adequate housing facilities and primary enclosures that meet the  
95 following minimum requirements:

96 (A) Housing facilities and primary enclosures must be kept in a sanitary condition and in  
97 good repair; must be sufficiently ventilated at all times to minimize odors, drafts, ammonia levels  
98 and to prevent moisture condensation; must have a means of fire suppression, such as functioning  
99 fire extinguishers or a sprinkler system on the premises; and must have sufficient lighting to allow  
100 for observation of the dogs at any time of day or night;

101 (B) Housing facilities and primary enclosures must enable all dogs to remain dry and clean;

102 (C) Housing facilities must provide shelter and protection from ~~extreme~~ adverse  
103 temperatures and weather conditions that may be uncomfortable or hazardous to the dogs;

104 (D) Housing facilities must provide sufficient shade to simultaneously shelter all of the dogs  
105 housed therein;

106 (E) A primary enclosure must have solid floors that are constructed in a manner that  
107 protects the dogs' feet and legs from injury;

108            (F) Primary enclosures must provide sufficient space to allow each animal to make normal  
109 postural adjustments, to turn freely and to easily stand, sit, stretch, move its head without touching  
110 the top of the enclosure, lie in a comfortable position with limbs extended, move about and assume  
111 a comfortable posture for feeding, drinking, urinating and defecating. A primary enclosure shall  
112 allow animals to sit, sleep, and eat away from where they defecate and urinate. For animals  
113 housed long-term, primary enclosures shall include opportunities for hiding, playing, resting,  
114 feeding, and eliminating. Dogs must be provided with a rest board, floormat, or similar device that  
115 can be maintained in a sanitary condition.

116            ~~(F)~~ (G) Primary enclosures must be placed no higher than 42 inches above the floor and  
117 may not be placed over or stacked on top of another cage or primary enclosure;

118            ~~(G)~~ (H) Feces, hair, dirt, debris and food waste must be removed from primary enclosures  
119 and housing facilities ~~at least daily or more often, if necessary~~ sufficiently often to prevent  
120 accumulation and to reduce disease hazards, insects, pests and odors;

121            ~~(H)~~ (I) All dogs in the same enclosure at the same time must be compatible, as determined  
122 by observation. Breeding females in heat may not be in the same enclosure at the same time with  
123 sexually mature males, except for breeding purposes. Breeding females and their litters may not  
124 be in the same enclosure at the same time with other adult dogs. Puppies under 12 weeks may not  
125 be in the same enclosure at the same time with other adult dogs, other than the dam or foster dam  
126 unless under immediate supervision. Dogs which are fearful or aggressive toward other animals,  
127 are stressed by the presence of other animals, require individual monitoring, or are ill and require  
128 treatment that cannot be provided in group housing shall be separated from other dogs and  
129 provided with individual enrichment; and

130            ~~(I)~~ (J) Sick dogs shall be isolated sufficiently so as not to endanger the health of other dogs  
131 and protocols shall be in place to control parasites and prevent transmission of contagious  
132 diseases.

133            (d) To ensure compliance with state animal care laws and regulations, commercial dog

134 breeding locations are subject to biannual inspections by animal control officers or law-  
135 enforcement officers.

136 (e) It is unlawful for a commercial dog breeder to operate if he or she has been convicted of  
137 animal cruelty in any local, state, or federal jurisdiction.

138 (f) Any commercial dog breeder who violates any provision of this section is guilty of a  
139 misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than \$1,000 \$1,500 per  
140 violation. In any proceeding brought pursuant to the provisions of this section, a circuit judge or  
141 magistrate may grant a person accused of violating this section an improvement period not to  
142 exceed one year upon such terms and conditions as the judge or magistrate may determine. Upon  
143 successful completion of the improvement period the judge or magistrate shall dismiss the  
144 charges.

145 ~~(g) Nothing in this section exempts a facility licensed by the United States Department of~~  
146 ~~Agriculture from compliance.~~

147 (h) ~~(g)~~ Nothing in this section prevents any local, state or federal law-enforcement agency  
148 from investigating animal cruelty in commercial dog breeding operations.

**§19-20-27. Dogs unfit for sale and purchaser's remedies.**

1 (a) A dog shall be considered unfit for sale if:

2 (1) Within 15 days after a purchaser has taken physical possession of a dog following the  
3 sale by a breeder, the purchaser discovers that the dog has become ill and the purchaser obtains  
4 written verification from a licensed veterinarian that this is due to an illness or disease that existed  
5 in the dog on or before delivery of the dog;

6 (2) Within one year after the purchaser has taken physical possession of the dog after the  
7 sale by a breeder, the purchaser discovers that the dog has a congenital or hereditary condition  
8 and the purchaser obtains written verification from a licensed veterinarian that the condition  
9 adversely affects the health of the dog or that it requires, or is likely in the future to require,  
10 hospitalization or nonelective surgical procedures and that such condition should have been

11 known to the breeder at the time of purchase.

12 (b) There is a rebuttable presumption that an illness existed at the time of sale if the dog  
13 dies within 15 days of delivery to the purchaser.

14 (c) If a dog is deemed unfit for sale pursuant to the provisions of subsection (a) of this  
15 section, the purchaser shall be allowed, at the purchaser's election, any of the following remedies:

16 (1) Return of the dog to the breeder for a refund of the purchase prices, plus sales tax, and  
17 reimbursement for reasonable veterinary fees for diagnosis and treating the dog in an amount not  
18 to exceed the original purchase price of the dog including sales tax;

19 (2) Exchange the dog for another dog of the purchaser's choice of equivalent value,  
20 providing that a replacement dog is available, and reimburse the purchaser for reasonable  
21 veterinary fees for diagnosis and treatment of the dog in an amount not to exceed the original  
22 purchase price of the dog including sales tax;

23 (3) Reimbursement to the purchaser for veterinary fees for diagnosis and treatment of the  
24 dog in an amount not to exceed 150 percent of the original purchase price of the dog including  
25 sales tax; or

26 (4) In the event of the death of the dog, the purchaser may obtain a refund for the purchase  
27 price of the dog plus sales tax or a replacement dog of the purchaser's choice of equivalent value  
28 and reimbursement of reasonable veterinary fees for the diagnosis and treatment of the dog in an  
29 amount not to exceed the purchase price of the dog plus sales tax.

30 (d) To be eligible to claim the remedies provided in this section, the purchaser shall:

31 (1) Notify the breeder as soon as possible, but no later than five days after the diagnosis by  
32 a veterinarian of a qualifying medical or health problem, including a congenital or hereditary  
33 condition, and provide the name and telephone number of the veterinarian providing the  
34 diagnosis; and

35 (2) Return the dog, if alive, to the breeder along with the written statement of the licensed  
36 veterinarian made to the purchaser; or

37 (3) Provide the breeder, in the event of the dog's death, with a written statement of a  
38 licensed veterinarian attesting that the dog died from an illness that existed on or before delivery of  
39 the dog to the purchaser.

40 (e) No refund, replacement, or reimbursement of veterinary fees shall be made if any of the  
41 following conditions exist:

42 (1) The illness, condition, or death resulted from maltreatment or neglect occurring, or from  
43 an injury sustained, or an illness or condition contracted, subsequent to the delivery of the dog to  
44 the purchaser;

45 (2) The purchaser fails to carry out the treatment recommended by the examining  
46 veterinarian who made the initial diagnosis;

47 (3) The disease, illness, or condition was disclosed in a written statement from the breeder  
48 to the purchaser made pursuant to §19-20-26(c)(7) of this code.

49 (f) For purposes of this section, the value of veterinary services shall be deemed  
50 reasonable if the services rendered are appropriate for the presenting condition of the dog, and for  
51 the diagnosis and treatment of the identified illness, disease, or condition and the charges of the  
52 services are comparable to similar services rendered by other licensed veterinarians in the  
53 surrounding community.

54 (g) To receive reimbursement for reasonable veterinary expenses, the purchaser must  
55 submit an itemized statement of all veterinary services performed and medications provided to the  
56 dog.

57 (h) In the event that the breeder wishes to contest a demand for any of the remedies  
58 provided in this section, the breeder may, except in the case of the death of the dog, require the  
59 purchaser to produce the dog for examination by a licensed veterinarian selected by the breeder.  
60 This examination shall be conducted at the expense of the breeder.

61 (i) If the purchaser and the breeder are unable to reach resolution within 10 days following  
62 the breeder's receipt of the purchaser's demand and presentation of a veterinarian's statement,

63 the purchaser may initiate a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction to resolve the dispute.  
 64 The prevailing party in the dispute may also claim and receive reasonable attorney's fees if the  
 65 opposing party is found to have acted in bad faith in the purchase or in pursuit of or opposition to  
 66 the remedies provided in this section.

67 (j) Nothing in this section shall, in any way, limit the rights or remedies that are otherwise  
 68 available to a consumer under any other law. Nor shall this section limit the breeder and purchaser  
 69 from agreeing between themselves upon terms and conditions that are not inconsistent with this  
 70 section. However, any agreement or contract by a purchaser to waive any rights provided in this  
 71 section shall be void and unenforceable.

**CHAPTER 61. CRIMES AND THEIR PUNISHMENT.**

**ARTICLE 8. CRIMES AGAINST CHASTITY, MORALITY AND DECENCY.**

**§61-8-19. Cruelty to animals; penalties; exclusions.**

- 1 (a)(1) It is unlawful for any person to intentionally, knowingly or recklessly,
- 2 (A) Mistreat an animal in cruel manner;
- 3 (B) Abandon an animal;
- 4 (C) Withhold;
- 5 (i) Proper sustenance, including food or water;
- 6 (ii) Shelter that protects from the elements of weather; or
- 7 (iii) Medical treatment, necessary to sustain normal health and fitness or to end the
- 8 suffering of any animal;
- 9 (D) Abandon an animal to die;
- 10 (E) Leave an animal unattended and confined in a motor vehicle when physical injury to or
- 11 death of the animal is likely to result;
- 12 (F) Ride an animal when it is physically unfit;
- 13 (G) Bait or harass an animal for the purpose of making it perform for a person's

14 amusement;

15 (H) Cruelly chain or tether an animal; or

16 (I) Use, train or possess a domesticated animal for the purpose of seizing, detaining or  
17 maltreating any other domesticated animal.

18 (2) Any person in violation of subdivision (1) of this subsection is guilty of a misdemeanor  
19 and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than ~~\$300~~ \$500 nor more than \$2,000, or  
20 confined in jail not more than six months, or both fined and confined. A person who has a second  
21 or subsequent conviction for a violation of subdivision (1) of this subsection is guilty of a felony  
22 and, upon conviction thereof, shall be confined in a state correctional facility for not less than one  
23 nor more than five years and be fined not less than \$1,000 nor more than \$5,000. As used in this  
24 section, "bodily injury" means substantial physical pain, illness, or any impairment of physical  
25 condition.

26 (b) A person who intentionally tortures, or mutilates or maliciously kills an animal, or  
27 causes, procures or authorizes any other person to torture, mutilate or maliciously kill an animal, is  
28 guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be ~~confined~~ imprisoned in a correctional  
29 facility not less than one nor more than five years and be fined not less than ~~\$1,000~~ \$2,500 nor  
30 more than ~~\$5,000~~ \$7,500. For the purposes of this subsection, "torture" means an action taken for  
31 the primary purpose of inflicting pain.

32 (c) A person, other than a licensed veterinarian or a person acting under the direction or  
33 with the approval of a licensed veterinarian, who knowingly and willfully administers or causes to  
34 be administered to any animal participating in any contest any controlled substance or any other  
35 drug for the purpose of altering or otherwise affecting said animal's performance is guilty of a  
36 misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than \$500 nor more than  
37 \$2,000.

38 (d) Any person convicted of a violation of this section forfeits his or her interest in any  
39 animal and all interest in the animal vests in the humane society or county pound of the county in

40 which the conviction was rendered and the person is, in addition to any fine imposed, liable for any  
41 costs incurred or to be incurred by the humane society or county pound as a result.

42 (e) For the purpose of this section, the term "controlled substance" has the same meaning  
43 ascribed to it by §60A-1-101(d) of this code.

44 (f) The provisions of this section do not apply to lawful acts of hunting, fishing, trapping or  
45 animal training or farm livestock, poultry, gaming fowl or wildlife kept in private or licensed game  
46 farms if kept and maintained according to usual and accepted standards of livestock, poultry,  
47 gaming fowl or wildlife or game farm production and management, nor to humane use of animals  
48 or activities regulated under and in conformity with the provisions of 7 U.S.C. §2131, *et seq.* and  
49 the regulations promulgated thereunder, as both statutes and regulations are in effect on the  
50 effective date of this section.

51 (g) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, any person convicted  
52 of a second or subsequent violation of subsection (a) is guilty of a misdemeanor and, shall be  
53 confined in jail for a period of not less than 90 days nor more than one year, fined not less than  
54 \$500 nor more than \$3,000, or both. The incarceration set forth in this subsection is mandatory  
55 unless the provisions of subsection (h) of this section are complied with.

56 (h)(1) Notwithstanding any provision of this code to the contrary, no person who has been  
57 convicted of a violation of the provisions of subsection (a) or (b) of this section may be granted  
58 probation until the defendant has undergone a complete psychiatric or psychological evaluation  
59 and the court has reviewed the evaluation. Unless the defendant is determined by the court to be  
60 indigent, he or she is responsible for the cost of the evaluation.

61 (2) For any person convicted of a violation of subsection (a) or (b) of this section, the court  
62 may, in addition to the penalties provided in this section, impose a requirement that he or she  
63 complete a program of anger management intervention for perpetrators of animal cruelty. Unless  
64 the defendant is determined by the court to be indigent, he or she is responsible for the cost of the  
65 program.

66 (i) In addition to any other penalty which can be imposed for a violation of this section, a  
67 court shall may prohibit any person so convicted from possessing, owning or residing with any  
68 animal or type of animal for a period of five years following entry of a misdemeanor conviction and  
69 fifteen years following entry of a felony conviction. A violation under this subsection is a  
70 misdemeanor punishable by a fine not exceeding \$2,000 and forfeiture of the animal.

**§61-8-19d. Unlawful confinement of domestic animals.**

1 (a) It is unlawful for a person to chain, tether, cage, or stake out a domestic animal that is in  
2 the person's custody and:

3 (1) With a tether that is not a reasonable length given the size of the animal and available  
4 space;

5 (2) With a tether that allows the animal to become entangled in a manner that risks the  
6 health and safety of the animal;

7 (3) In such manner that the animal is not able to easily stand, sit, lie, turn around, and make  
8 all other, normal body movements in a comfortable, normal position for the animal;

9 (4) In such a manner that the animal may go beyond the property line of the owner or  
10 custodian of the animal unless the person has obtained permission from the owner of the affected  
11 property; or

12 (5) Leave outside during extreme weather conditions, including, but not limited to, extreme  
13 heat, freezing or near-freezing temperatures, thunderstorms, tornadoes, or floods, unless  
14 adequate food, potable water, shade, shelter, and protection is provided based upon the breed,  
15 age, general health of the dog, and its ability to handle the environment.

16 (b) Unlawful confinement of an animal does not include:

17 (1) Using a handheld leash for the purposes of walking a dog, cat, or other domestic  
18 animal;

19 (2) Securing a dog pursuant to the requirements of a campground, recreational area, or  
20 other public area; or

21 (3) Securing a dog or other domestic animal for transportation.

22 (c) Any person in violation of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction  
23 thereof, shall be fined not less than \$250 nor more than \$500.

**§61-8-19e. Hoarding of animals.**

1 (a) The hoarding of animals is unlawful and is prohibited. A person is guilty of hoarding  
2 animals when he or she possesses a large number of companion animals, and:

3 (1) Fails to, or is unable to provide food and water, adequate shelter and protection from  
4 weather, veterinary care, and humane care and treatment, and

5 (2) Displays an inability to recognize or understand the nature of, or has a reckless  
6 disregard for, the conditions under which the companion animals are living and the deleterious  
7 impact they have on the companion animals and the owner’s health and well-being. A person who  
8 is found to be hoarding animals is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be  
9 fined not more than \$500.

10 (b) Animals found to be living under the conditions outlined in this section shall be taken  
11 from the hoarder and turned over to an animal shelter for proper care and relocation.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide increased protections for the welfare of domestic animals in the care of animal shelters, breeders, and private individuals.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.