

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2025 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 2715**

By Delegates Ward, Stephens, and Sheedy

[Introduced February 20, 2025; referred to the  
Committee on Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §19-20-6 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to  
2 increasing the impoundment period for dogs and modifying notice requirements.

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

**ARTICLE                      20.                      DOGS                      AND                      CATS.**

**§19-20-6. County dog warden; rules and regulations for dog control; prosecution and  
penalties for violation of ordinances.**

1 (a) The county commission of each county may appoint and employ a county dog warden,  
2 and such number of deputies, for such time, and at such compensation, as such county  
3 commission shall deem reasonable and necessary to enforce the provisions of this code with  
4 respect to the control and registration of dogs, the impounding, care and destruction of unlicensed  
5 dogs. Such county dog warden may be appointed a deputy assessor for the purpose of collecting  
6 the dog tax and registration fees, taking the dog registration and providing the tags authorized by  
7 this article. The county dog warden or any deputies may, in the discretion of the county  
8 commission, be regularly employed officers or agents of any humane society or society for the  
9 prevention of cruelty to animals, organized and operating under the laws of this state and owning,  
10 controlling and operating a suitable place within the county for impounding and destroying dogs. In  
11 addition to the compensation provided for above, a bounty of 50¢ per dog shall be paid to the  
12 county dog warden or deputy who captures an unregistered dog. Such county dog warden and  
13 deputy wardens shall each give bond in a sum of not less than \$1,000 and not more than \$2,000  
14 conditioned on the faithful performance of their duties. Such bonds shall be filed with the county  
15 commission by which such persons are appointed.

16 The county dog warden and his or her deputies shall patrol the county in which they are  
17 appointed and shall seize on sight and impound any dog more than six months of age found not  
18 wearing a valid registration tag, except dogs kept constantly confined in a registered dog kennel.  
19 They shall be responsible for the proper care and final disposition of all impounded dogs. The  
20 county dog warden shall make a monthly report, in writing, to the county commission of his or her

21 county. When any dog shall have been seized and impounded, the county dog warden shall  
22 forthwith give notice to the owner of such dog, if such owner be known to the warden, that such  
23 dog has been impounded and that it will be sold or destroyed if not redeemed within ~~five~~ 30 days. If  
24 the owner of such dog be not known to the dog warden, he or she shall post a notice in the county  
25 courthouse, on the County Commission official website, or on the County Commission official  
26 Facebook page. The notice shall include a photograph of the dog, describe the dog and the place  
27 where seized and shall advise the unknown owner that such dog will be sold or destroyed if not  
28 redeemed within ~~five~~ 30 days.

29 (b) Any county commission may promulgate and enforce such ordinances, rules and  
30 regulations, not inconsistent with the provisions of this article, as it considers necessary or  
31 convenient for the control and management of all dogs in the county, or any portion thereof,  
32 regardless of the age of any such dog: *Provided*, That the county commissions may promulgate  
33 and enforce such ordinances, rules and regulations to the extent necessary for the implementation  
34 of the provisions contained in this article.

35 (c) The county commission of each county may provide in such ordinance for the arrest,  
36 conviction and punishment of any person who violates the provisions thereof. The county  
37 commission of each county may provide in any such ordinance that any person who violates the  
38 provisions of the ordinance is guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction thereof, that such  
39 person is subject to a fine or fines. The amount of such fine for a single violation of any such  
40 ordinance may not exceed \$100. Magistrate courts and circuit courts shall have concurrent  
41 jurisdiction with respect to such misdemeanors.

1

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to increase the impoundment period for dogs and modify notice requirements.

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