

**ASSEMBLY, No. 150**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**219th LEGISLATURE**

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PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman PARKER SPACE**

**District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)**

**Assemblyman HAROLD "HAL" J. WIRTHS**

**District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)**

**Assemblyman GORDON M. JOHNSON**

**District 37 (Bergen)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblymen DiMaio, Rooney, Assemblywoman DiMaso, Assemblymen**

**Webber, Catalano and McGuckin**

**SYNOPSIS**

“New Jersey Safe Haven for Protection of Domestic Companion Animals Act.”

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/16/2020)**

1   **AN ACT** concerning the health and safety of abandoned domestic  
2       companion animals and supplementing Title 4 of the Revised  
3       Statutes.

4  
5       **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
6       *of New Jersey:*

7  
8       1.   This act shall be known and may be cited as the “New Jersey  
9       Safe Haven for Protection of Domestic Companion Animals Act.”

10  
11       2.   The Legislature finds and declares that, from time to time,  
12       domestic companion animals are abandoned outside of animal  
13       shelters or pounds without proper shelter or necessary care,  
14       sometimes to die before they are discovered by shelter or pound  
15       personnel; that, whether this abandonment occurs without concern  
16       for the welfare of the animal or from a person’s desperation over  
17       having no alternative to care for the animal, it is inhumane not to  
18       provide options to avoid the unnecessary suffering and death of  
19       these animals; and that, therefore similar to the need for the State  
20       law that established safe haven drop-offs for infant children in  
21       2000, it is necessary to provide safe havens for domestic companion  
22       animals whose caregivers can no longer care for them or that are  
23       found abandoned with no apparent caretakers.

24  
25       3.   As used in this act:

26       “Domestic companion animal” means any animal commonly  
27       referred to as a pet that was bought, bred, raised, or otherwise  
28       acquired, in accordance with local ordinances and State and federal  
29       law, for the primary purpose of providing companionship to the  
30       owner, rather than for business or agricultural purposes. “Domestic  
31       companion animal” shall not include “domestic livestock” as  
32       defined in subsection c. of section 1 of P.L.1995, c.311 (C.4:22-  
33       16.1).

34       “Necessary care” means necessary care as defined in R.S.4:22-  
35       15.

36       “Pound” means a pound as the term is defined in section 1 of  
37       P.L.1941, c.151 (C.4:19-15.1).

38       “Shelter” means a shelter as the term is defined in section 1 of  
39       P.L.1941, c.151 (C.4:19-15.1).

40  
41       4.   a.   Any person may voluntarily deliver a domestic  
42       companion animal to a shelter, pound, veterinary hospital, or police  
43       station in the State, and leave the animal with an employee,  
44       veterinarian, or police officer at the facility, whenever it is open or,  
45       in the case of a police station, has an officer present to receive the  
46       animal. No employee, veterinarian, or police officer at the shelter,  
47       pound, veterinary hospital, or police station, as applicable, may

1 refuse to accept any domestic companion animal delivered to the  
2 facility.

3 b. Each shelter, pound, veterinary hospital, and police station  
4 in the State shall post at its front entrance a conspicuous sign  
5 stating:

6 (1) the hours of operation during which the facility is open and a  
7 person is on the premises to receive a domestic companion animal;

8 (2) the telephone number and address of a facility where a  
9 domestic companion animal may be delivered when the shelter,  
10 pound, veterinary hospital, or police station is closed; and

11 (3) a warning against abandoning or relinquishing the domestic  
12 companion animal in any way other than delivering the animal to a  
13 person at a facility who can receive and care for the animal.

14 c. A shelter or pound receiving the animal shall provide the  
15 animal with necessary care and shall provide for the animal's  
16 disposition in accordance with the provisions of section 16 of  
17 P.L.1941, c.151 (C.4:19-15.16). A veterinary hospital or police  
18 station receiving the animal shall hold the animal until the animal is  
19 transferred to a shelter or pound, and shall provide necessary care  
20 for the animal in a manner as may be established as an operating  
21 procedure by the veterinary hospital or police station.

22 d. Any person who voluntarily delivers a domestic companion  
23 animal pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall not be required  
24 to:

25 (1) disclose the person's name, or identifying information of the  
26 owner of the domestic companion animal if different from the  
27 person who delivers the domestic companion animal to the shelter,  
28 pound, veterinary hospital, or police station; or

29 (2) provide background information about the animal's owner or  
30 medical information about the domestic companion animal.

31 e. The provisions of subsection d. of this section shall not  
32 preclude the person, from voluntarily providing information  
33 concerning the domestic companion animal or the animal's owner,  
34 but, under no circumstances, shall the person delivering the animal  
35 be liable for care or disposition of the animal.

36 f. The shelter, pound, veterinary hospital, or police station may  
37 attempt to identify the owner of the domestic companion animal but  
38 shall not be required to attempt to reunite the animal with its owner.  
39 The shelter, pound, veterinary hospital, or police station may place  
40 the domestic companion animal with an adoptive owner as soon as  
41 possible.

42 g. The Department of Health shall provide every municipality,  
43 shelter, pound, veterinary hospital, and police station in the State  
44 with information concerning the requirements of this act.

45

46 5. a. The Commissioner of Health shall establish an  
47 educational and public information program to promote safe  
48 placement alternatives for a domestic companion animal whose

1 owner can no longer provide necessary care for the animal or that is  
2 found without an owner and necessary care. This program may  
3 include the establishment of a 24-hour, toll-free hotline to assist in  
4 providing information about safe havens and safe haven procedures  
5 for domestic companion animals.

6 b. (1) The Commissioner of Health, in consultation with the  
7 Commissioner of Education, shall develop a plan to distribute to all  
8 public school districts in the State with students in grades three  
9 through 12, pamphlets, posters, and other educational materials that  
10 provide information to the students of the provisions of this act.

11 (2) The Department of Health shall distribute the pamphlets,  
12 posters, and other educational materials, at no charge, to all public  
13 school districts in the State. The department shall update the  
14 pamphlets, posters, and other educational materials as necessary,  
15 and shall make additional copies available to educators and other  
16 individuals working with public school students in grades three  
17 through 12.

18  
19 6. The Commissioner of Health, pursuant to the  
20 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et  
21 seq.), shall adopt rules and regulations necessary to implement this  
22 act.

23  
24 7. This act shall take effect immediately.  
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27 STATEMENT  
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29 This bill provides that any person, may voluntarily and  
30 anonymously deliver a domestic companion animal to a shelter,  
31 pound, veterinary hospital, or police station in the State, and leave  
32 the animal with an employee, veterinarian, or police officer at the  
33 facility. The bill provides that the person would not be liable for the  
34 care or disposition of the animal. The bill further provides that no  
35 employee, veterinarian, or police officer at the shelter, pound,  
36 veterinary hospital, or police station, as applicable, may refuse to  
37 accept any domestic companion animal. Finally, the bill directs the  
38 Commissioner of Health to establish a public education and  
39 information program to disseminate the information on the  
40 requirements of this bill to every municipality, shelter, pound,  
41 veterinary hospital, police station, and public school with students  
42 in grades three through 12.