

ASSEMBLY, No. 2734

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman RONALD S. DANCER

District 12 (Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean)

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Requires reporting of animal abuse by certain child protection agency employees.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/13/2020)

1 AN ACT concerning the reporting of animal abuse by certain child
2 protection agency employees and supplementing Chapter 6 of
3 Title 9 of the Revised Statutes.

4

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

7

8 1. a. An employee of the Department of Children and Families
9 who is designated by the Commissioner of Children and Families to
10 investigate child abuse or neglect, while acting within the scope of
11 their employment, who has reasonable cause to believe that an
12 animal other than domestic livestock, has been subjected to an act
13 of animal abuse, including any animal cruelty or neglect, shall
14 report, as soon as possible, the suspected animal abuse to the Chief
15 County Humane Law Enforcement Officer and to:

16 (1) the local humane law enforcement officer if the municipality
17 has its own police department or if the municipality is patrolled by a
18 county police department; or

19 (2) the State Police if the municipality does not have its own
20 police department.

21 b. An employee of the Department of Children and Families
22 who is designated by the Commissioner of Children and Families to
23 investigate child abuse or neglect, while acting within the scope of
24 their employment, who has reasonable cause to believe that an
25 animal that is domestic livestock has been subjected to an act of
26 animal abuse by being raised, kept, cared for, treated, marketed, or
27 sold in a manner that violates the standards, rules, or regulations
28 adopted pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1995, c.311 (C.4:22-16.1),
29 shall report, as soon as possible, the suspected animal abuse to the
30 New Jersey Department of Agriculture and to the municipal or
31 county humane law enforcement officer.

32 c. An employee, or former employee, who makes a report or
33 provides records or information or who testifies in any judicial
34 proceeding arising from the report, records, or information, shall be
35 immune from any civil or criminal liability or administrative
36 penalty or sanction on account of the report, records, information,
37 or testimony, unless the employee acted in bad faith or with
38 malicious purpose.

39 d. As used in this section:

40 "Animal abuse" means any violation of chapter 22 of Title 4 of
41 the Revised Statutes, or any other provision of law establishing a
42 crime against animals.

43 "Animal cruelty" means an act that violates R.S.4:22-17,
44 R.S.4:22-18, R.S.4:22-19, R.S.4:22-20, R.S.4:22-23, R.S.4:22-24,
45 section 1 and 2 of P.L.1999, c.307 (C.4:22-25.3 and 4:22-25.4), or
46 section 1 of P.L.2012, c.52 (C.4:22-25.5); is enumerated under
47 R.S.4:22-26; or would constitute failure to provide necessary care
48 pursuant to P.L.2017, c.189 (C.4:22-17.1 et seq.).

1 “Domestic livestock” means domestic livestock as the term is
2 defined in section 1 of P.L.1995, c.311 (C.4:22-16.1).

3 “Neglect” means failure to provide necessary care for an animal
4 as defined in R.S.4:22-15 and pursuant to R.S.4:22-17.

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6 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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11 In recent years, a growing body of research, including studies
12 published in the *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, the *Journal of*
13 *Interpersonal Violence*, and *Violence Against Women*, has explored
14 the co-occurrence of animal abuse and domestic violence. In the
15 wake of these studies, state legislatures have introduced and
16 adopted bills mandating the cross-reporting of animal and child
17 abuse between humane law enforcement agencies and child
18 protective agencies.

19 This bill requires an employee of the Department of Children and
20 Families who is designated by the Commissioner of Children and
21 Families to investigate child abuse or neglect, while acting within
22 the scope of their employment, to report suspected animal abuse to
23 certain humane law enforcement officials and agencies and/or to the
24 New Jersey Department of Agriculture.