

SENATE, No. 2075

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator ANTHONY M. BUCCO
District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

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

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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-
21 1 et seq.), shall adopt rules and regulations necessary to implement
22 this act.

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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.