

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 834

BY REPRESENTATIVE MCMAHEN

ANIMALS: Provides relative to animal shelters

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 3:2467, relative to designation and operation of animal shelters; to provide for
3 the care, holding, and disposition of lost, stray, or at-large domestic animals; to
4 authorize certain governing authorities to designate animal shelters; to require
5 shelters to comply with minimum standards of care and applicable hold periods; to
6 provide for owner notification and acquisition of unclaimed animals; and to provide
7 for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 3:2467 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 §2467. Designation of animal shelters; optional acquisition of ownership of stray
11 animals

12 A.(1) Any political subdivision in this state may designate any animal shelter
13 to provide sheltering services for lost, stray, and at-large domestic animals found
14 within the jurisdiction of the governmental entity.

15 (2) A designated animal shelter may be owned or operated by a political
16 subdivision or private entity, a licensed veterinarian, or any other entity reasonably
17 competent to provide sheltering services.

18 B. A designated animal shelter may acquire ownership of a lost, stray,
19 unowned or at-large animal under the following conditions:

1 (1) The designated animal shelter shall comply with all applicable state or
2 local laws, regulations, or ordinances regarding hold periods for that animal. If no
3 hold period is specified by any statute, parish, or municipality, the minimum stray
4 hold period shall be seventy-two hours.

5 (2) During the initial hold period, the shelter does all of the following:

6 (a)(i) Makes a reasonably diligent effort to locate the owner and return the
7 animal to the owner. The shelter shall scan the animal for a microchip and check for
8 any other identifying information, including tattoos or collars with tags, at least two
9 times, with the scans or checks conducted at least twenty-four hours apart. The
10 shelter shall maintain a record of the dates the scans or checks were performed for
11 at least one year.

12 (ii) If the shelter obtains information identifying the animal's owner, the
13 shelter shall make a diligent effort to notify the owner and provide at least
14 seventy-two hours for the owner to respond, commencing from the first attempt to
15 notify. If the owner is located, the owner shall have seven days from notification to
16 reclaim the animal unless the owner relinquishes the animal to the shelter or another
17 person.

18 (b) Maintains continuous possession of the animal. Possession by the shelter
19 may be constructive, and shall include allowing persons to foster animals, provided
20 that any such foster shall relinquish the animal to the shelter upon the shelter's
21 request, unless and until the hold period is complete and the shelter transfers
22 ownership of the animal to the foster.

23 (c) Makes the animal, or a photograph with written description of the animal,
24 available at the shelter at all times and allow persons seeking lost animals to view
25 such animals and records.

26 C.(1) If an animal remains unclaimed after the expiration of the applicable
27 hold period provided in this Section and after the shelter has made a diligent effort
28 to notify and return the animal to its owner, the shelter may acquire ownership of the
29 animal and may transfer ownership to another person or entity.

1 (2) If ownership is acquired pursuant to this Section and the shelter thereafter
2 transfers ownership to another person or entity, the shelter shall not disclose the
3 identity or contact information of the transferee to any person, including any alleged
4 prior owner, except pursuant to a lawfully issued subpoena or with the written
5 consent of the transferee.

6 D. Nothing in this Section shall be construed to require a political
7 subdivision to designate an animal shelter, nor to alter or impair existing laws,
8 regulations, or ordinances in place that authorizes a shelter to acquire immediate
9 ownership of an animal by abandonment, transfer, relinquishment, or any other
10 lawful means.

11 E. No political subdivision, designated animal shelter, or any officer or
12 employee thereof shall be liable for negligence or damages, nor subject to
13 prosecution, for acquiring ownership of animals or permitting animals to be fostered
14 in accordance with this Section.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 834 Original

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McMahen

Abstract: Authorizes any political subdivision of this state to designate an animal shelter to provide services for lost, stray, unowned, or at-large domestic animals. Requires hold periods, diligent owner notification, and continued possession, with the option or shelters acquire ownership of unclaimed animals.

Proposed law authorizes the political subdivision to designate an animal shelter to provide sheltering services for lost, stray, unowned, and at-large domestic animals within its jurisdiction. Provides that a designated animal shelter may be owned or operated by a political subdivision or private entity, a licensed veterinarian, or any other entity reasonably competent to provide sheltering services. Requires the shelter to comply with the minimum standards of care and operating requirements set forth in present law and any other applicable state or local law.

Proposed law authorizes a designated animal shelter to acquire ownership of animals under certain conditions. Requires a designated animal shelter to comply with all applicable state and local laws, regulations, and ordinances governing hold periods. Further requires a hold period of at least 72 hours only if no hold period is established by a parish or municipality.

Proposed law requires a designated shelter during the hold period to make diligent efforts to identify and notify the owner, including scanning for a microchip at least twice 24 hours apart and maintaining records. Further requires the shelter to maintain continuous or

constructive possession and to make the animal or its photograph and description available for public viewing. Additionally, requires fosters to return the animal to the shelter upon request unless the hold period ends or ownership is transferred to them. Provides that if the animal remains unclaimed after the hold period and notification efforts, the shelter acquires ownership and may transfer it to another person or entity.

Proposed law clarifies that no governmental entity is required to designate an animal shelter under proposed law, nor does it affect provisions of present law allowing shelters to acquire immediate ownership of animals by abandonment, transfer, relinquishment, or other lawful means.

Proposed law restricts liability against governmental entities, designated animal shelters, officers, and employees for acquiring or permitting animals to be fostered.

(Adds R.S. 3:2467)