

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; to provide for
7 the powers, authority, and discretion of local governmental subdivisions regarding
8 animal control and shelter operations; to promote humane treatment of animals; to
9 provide for limitations and liability; and to provide for related matters.

10 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

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

12 §2467. Designation of animal shelters; optional acquisition of ownership of stray
13 animals

14 A.(1) Any local governmental subdivision in this state may designate any
15 animal shelter to provide sheltering services for lost, stray, and at-large domestic
16 animals found within its respective jurisdiction.

17 (2) A designated animal shelter may be owned or operated by a local
18 governmental subdivision, private entity, nonprofit organization, licensed
19 veterinarian, or any other entity reasonably competent to provide sheltering services.

1 (3) A designated shelter shall comply with applicable state and local laws
2 pertaining to animal shelters.

3 (4) A local governmental subdivision shall retain full discretion to:

4 (a) Select, contract with, or operate a shelter.

5 (b) Determine the scope of services provided.

6 (c) Enter into cooperative agreements with other local governmental
7 subdivisions.

8 (d) Adopt local standards or ordinances that meet or exceed the requirements
9 of this Section.

10 (e) Establish longer holding periods by local ordinance.

11 (f) Revoke the designation.

12 B.(1) A designated animal shelter may acquire sole ownership of a lost,
13 stray, unowned, or at-large animal only after compliance with all applicable state or
14 local laws, regulations, or ordinances regarding hold periods for that animal. If no
15 hold period is specified by any statute, parish, or municipality, the minimum stray
16 hold period shall be three days, excluding legal public holidays, to allow for owner
17 identification and recovery.

18 (2) During the initial hold period, the shelter shall do all of the following:

19 (a)(i) Makes a reasonably diligent effort to locate the owner and return the
20 animal to the owner. The shelter shall scan the animal for a microchip and check for
21 any other identifying information, including tattoos or collars with tags or any other
22 registration information at least twice, with the scans or checks conducted at least
23 twenty-four hours apart. The shelter shall maintain a record of the dates the scans
24 or checks were performed for at least one year.

25 (ii) If the shelter obtains information identifying the animal's owner, the
26 shelter shall make a diligent effort to notify the owner and provide at least three
27 days, exclusive of legal public holidays, for the owner to respond, commencing from
28 the first attempt to notify. If the owner is located, the owner shall have seven days

1 from notification to reclaim the animal unless the owner relinquishes the animal to
2 the shelter or another person.

3 (b) Maintains continuous possession of the animal. Possession by the shelter
4 may be constructive, and shall include allowing persons to foster animals, provided
5 that any such foster shall return the animal to the shelter upon the shelter's request,
6 unless the hold period has expired and the shelter transfers ownership of the animal.

7 (c) Makes the animal, or a photograph with a written description of the
8 animal, available for public viewing and allows persons seeking lost animals to view
9 such animals and related records.

10 C.(1) If an animal remains unclaimed after the expiration of the applicable
11 hold period provided in this Section and after the shelter has made a diligent effort
12 to identify, notify, and return the animal to its owner, the local governmental
13 subdivision or designated shelter may acquire ownership of the animal and may
14 transfer ownership to another person, whether natural or juridical, consistent with
15 applicable law. The designated animal shelter may place an animal with or transfer
16 ownership to a rescue organization.

17 (2) If ownership is acquired pursuant to this Section and the shelter thereafter
18 transfers ownership to another person, natural or juridical, the shelter shall not
19 disclose the identity or contact information of the transferee to any person, including
20 any alleged prior owner, except pursuant to a lawfully issued subpoena or with the
21 written consent of the transferee.

22 D. Nothing in this Section shall be construed to:

23 (1) Require a local governmental subdivision to designate an animal shelter.

24 (2) Alter or impair existing laws, regulations, or ordinances in place that
25 authorize a shelter to acquire immediate ownership of an animal by abandonment,
26 transfer, relinquishment, or any other lawful means.

27 (3) Create a statewide regulatory licensing scheme for animal shelters.

28 (4) Increase the financial burden of local governmental subdivisions.

1 E. No local governmental subdivision or designated animal shelter, or any
2 officer or employee thereof, shall be subject to civil damages arising from actions
3 taken in good faith in compliance with this Section, except for acts or omissions
4 constituting gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct.

5 F. This Section shall be construed to promote humane treatment of animals,
6 preserve local governmental flexibility, and avoid unnecessary regulatory burden.

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 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

McMahan

Abstract: Authorizes and gives full discretion to any local governmental 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 continuous or constructive possession, with the option of shelters to acquire ownership of unclaimed animals.

Proposed law authorizes the local governmental subdivision to designate an animal shelter to provide sheltering services for lost, stray, unowned, and at-large domestic animals within its respective jurisdiction. Authorizes a designated animal shelter to be owned or operated by a local governmental subdivision, private entity, nonprofit organization, 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 requires a designated shelter to comply with state and local laws pertaining to animal shelters and gives full discretion to a local governmental subdivision to do the following: select, contract with, or operate a shelter; determine the scope of services provided; enter into cooperative agreements with other local governmental subdivisions; adopt other local standards or ordinances; establish longer holding periods by local ordinance; and revoke any designations.

Proposed law authorizes a designated animal shelter to acquire sole ownership of animals under certain conditions. Requires a designated animal shelter to comply with all applicable state and local laws, regulations, or ordinances regarding hold periods. Further establishes a hold period of at least three days, exclusive of legal public holidays, 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, collar, or any other identifying or registration information, including tattoos or collars with tags, 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 expires or ownership is transferred. Provides that if the animal remains unclaimed after the hold period and notification efforts, the local governmental subdivision or designated shelter acquires ownership and may transfer it to

another person or entity. Authorizes a designated shelter to transfer ownership with or to a rescue organization.

Proposed law clarifies that nothing in proposed law requires any local governmental subdivision to do the following: designate an animal shelter; alter or impair existing laws, regulations, or ordinances in place that authorize a shelter to acquire immediate ownership of an animal by abandonment, transfer, relinquishment, or any other lawful means; create a statewide regulatory licensing scheme for animal shelters; or increase the financial burden on local governmental subdivisions. Exempts a local governmental subdivision or designated shelter, or any officer or employee of either, from being subject to civil damages arising from their actions taken in good faith, except those that constitute gross negligence or willful misconduct.

Proposed law requires that proposed law be construed to promote humane treatment of animals, preserve local governmental flexibility, and avoid unnecessary regulatory burden.

(Adds R.S. 3:2467)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development to the original bill:

1. Modify references from "political subdivisions" to "local governmental subdivisions".
2. Add a "nonprofit organization" as one that may own or operate a designated animal shelter.
3. Require a designated animal shelter to comply with state and local laws pertaining to animal shelters and gives full discretion to a local governmental subdivision to select, contract with, or operate a shelter; determine the scope of services provided; enter into cooperative agreements with other local governmental subdivisions; adopt other local standards or ordinances; establish longer holding periods by local ordinance; and revoke any designations.
4. Modify the establishment of a hold period from 72 hours to three days, exclusive of legal public holidays, for purposes of owner identification and recovery.
5. Revise terminology to replace "relinquish" with "return" when referring to a foster returning an animal to the shelter upon the shelter's request.
6. Remove the requirement that the shelter transfer ownership of the animal to the foster upon expiration of the hold period.
7. Authorize a local governmental subdivision or designated shelter to acquire ownership of an animal and transfer such ownership if the animal remains unclaimed after the hold period expires and after the shelter has made a diligent effort to identify and notify the owner.
8. Authorize an animal shelter to place an animal with or transfer ownership to a rescue organization.
9. Provide that nothing in proposed law can be construed to require a local governmental subdivision to designate an animal shelter; alter or impair existing laws, regulations, or ordinances in place that authorize a shelter to acquire immediate ownership of an animal by abandonment, transfer, relinquishment, or any other lawful means; create a statewide regulatory licensing scheme for

animal shelters; or increase the financial burden of local governmental subdivisions.

10. Exempt a local governmental subdivision or designated shelter, or any officer or employee of either, from being subject to civil damages arising from their actions taken in good faith, except those that constitute gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct.
11. Require that proposed law be construed to promote humane treatment of animals, preserve local governmental flexibility, and avoid unnecessary regulatory burden.
12. Make technical changes.