
DIGEST

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HB 834 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

McMahen

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.