

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 834

BY REPRESENTATIVE MCMAHEN

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
 29 from notification to reclaim the animal unless the owner relinquishes the animal to
 30 the shelter or another person.

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

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

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

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

20 **D. Nothing in this Section shall be construed to:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____