

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1186

As of March 22, 2013

Title: An act relating to veterinarian immunity from liability when reporting suspected animal cruelty.

Brief Description: Concerning veterinarian immunity from liability when reporting suspected animal cruelty.

Sponsors: Representatives Haigh, Nealey, Jinkins, Rodne, Shea, Ryu, Morrell and Tharinger.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/18/13, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 3/29/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: The state's laws for the prevention of cruelty to animals prohibits certain practices and activities involving animals. Animal cruelty in the first degree involves inflicting substantial pain on, causing physical injury to, or killing an animal by a means that causes undue suffering. Animal cruelty in the first degree is a class C felony.

Animal cruelty in the second degree is committed when a person knowingly, recklessly, or with criminal negligence inflicts unnecessary suffering or pain upon an animal. An owner may commit this crime by failing to provide necessary food, water, shelter, rest, or medical attention, or by abandoning the animal. Animal cruelty in the second degree is a gross misdemeanor.

The animal cruelty law contains a number of exemptions, including licensed research institutions; accepted husbandry practices in the commercial raising or slaughtering of livestock; the customary use of animals in rodeos or fairs; the killing of animals for food; and practices authorized under the game laws.

Immunity from liability means a person is free or exempt from a civil or legal penalty or burden.

Summary of Bill: A lawfully licensed veterinarian who reports, in good faith and in the normal course of business, a suspected incident of animal cruelty to the proper authorities is

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immune from liability in any civil or criminal action brought against the veterinarian for reporting the suspected incident.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.