

2025 -- H 5926

LC000626

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Introduced By: Representatives Noret, J. Brien, Kazarian, O'Brien, and Finkelman

Date Introduced: February 28, 2025

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 4-1 of the General Laws entitled "Cruelty to Animals" is hereby  
2 amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **4-1-44. Intentional or negligent injury or death of a pet caused by the act of another -**  
4 **- Cause of action -- Minimum and maximum noneconomic recovery.**

5 (a) If a person's pet is seriously injured or killed or sustains injuries which result in death  
6 caused by the unlawful and intentional, or negligent act of another, the trier of fact may find the  
7 individual causing the injury or death liable for up to a maximum of seven thousand five hundred  
8 dollars (\$7,500) in noneconomic damages; provided that, if such injury or death is caused by the  
9 negligent or intentional act of another, the injury, death or fatal injury must occur on the property  
10 of the injured or deceased pet's owner or caretaker, or while under the control and supervision of  
11 the injured or deceased pet's owner or caretaker.

12 (b) A person liable for the serious injury or death of a pet pursuant to the provisions of  
13 subsection (a) of this section shall be liable for a minimum recovery for noneconomic damages as  
14 follows:

15 (1) Any person liable for the serious injury of a pet pursuant to the provisions of subsection  
16 (a) of this section shall be liable to the owner of the pet in damages for noneconomic loss in a sum  
17 not less than five hundred dollars (\$500).

18 (2) Any person liable for the death or injury resulting in death of a pet pursuant to the  
19 provisions of subsection (a) of this section shall be liable to the owner of the pet in damages for

1 noneconomic loss in a sum not less than seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750).

2 (3) The recovery of noneconomic damages pursuant to the provisions of this section shall  
3 be limited to a single recovery in the case of joint or multiple owners of the pet suffering serious  
4 injury or death.

5 (c) Noneconomic damages awarded pursuant to this section shall include, but not be limited  
6 to, compensation for the loss of the reasonably expected society, companionship, love and affection  
7 of the pet.

8 (d) Limits for noneconomic damages set out in subsection (a) of this section shall not apply  
9 to any related causes of action to include, but not be limited to, intentional infliction of severe  
10 emotional distress; provided, however, the limitation on the recovery of noneconomic damages  
11 pursuant to the provisions of subsection (a) of this section shall only apply to the claim for negligent  
12 injury or death of the pet.

13 (e) As used in this section:

14 (1) "Caretaker" means any person to whom the pet owner has voluntarily relinquished  
15 temporary control, custody and/or supervision of their pet.

16 (2) "Pet" means any domesticated dog or cat normally maintained in or near the household  
17 of its owner.

18 (3) "Seriously injured" means any physical injury consisting of broken bone(s) or  
19 permanently disfiguring lacerations requiring stiches or sutures.

20 (f) This section shall not apply to any not-for-profit entity or governmental agency or their  
21 employees, negligently causing the death of a pet while acting on behalf of the public health or  
22 animal welfare.

23 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

=====  
LC000626  
=====

EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

\*\*\*

- 1           This act would create a cause of action for the intentional or negligent injury or death of a
- 2 pet.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

=====  
LC000626  
=====