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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- DOGS

Introduced By: Senator Pamela J. Lauria

Date Introduced: February 06, 2026

Referred To: Senate Housing & Municipal Government

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Section 4-13-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 4-13 entitled "Dogs" is hereby  
2 amended to read as follows:

3           **4-13-1. Regulatory ordinances — Enforcement and penalties.**

4           (a) City or town councils may make any ordinances concerning dogs in their cities or towns  
5 as they deem expedient, to be enforced by the destruction or disposition of the animal, or by  
6 pecuniary penalties not exceeding ten dollars (\$10.00) for the first offense, not exceeding fifteen  
7 dollars (\$15.00) for the second offense within a year, not exceeding twenty-five dollars (\$25.00)  
8 for the third and any subsequent offense within a year to be recovered by action of debt, or by  
9 complaint and warrant, to use as that city council or town council may prescribe.

10          (b)(1) Barrington town council is authorized to enact an ordinance:

11           (i) Permitting the animal control officer in the town to issue citations to the owners of dogs  
12 for violation of any animal control ordinance which may be paid by mail; and

13           (ii) To prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

14           (A) A fine of not more than ~~twenty five dollars (\$25.00)~~ fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the first  
15 offense within a calendar year;

16           (B) A fine of not more than ~~fifty dollars (\$50.00)~~ one hundred dollars (\$100) for the second  
17 offense within a calendar year;

18           (C) A fine of not more ~~seventy five dollars (\$75.00)~~ one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) for  
19 the third and each subsequent offense within a calendar year.

1           (2)(i) Bristol town council is authorized to enact an ordinance permitting the dog officer in  
2 that town to issue citations to the owners of dogs for the violation of any dog ordinance which may  
3 be paid by mail, and to prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

4           (A) A fine not exceeding twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for the first offense within a calendar  
5 year;

6           (B) A fine not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the second offense within a calendar  
7 year;

8           (C) A fine not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100) for the third and each subsequent  
9 offense within a calendar year.

10          (ii) The Bristol town council may by ordinance prescribe the number of licensed dogs and  
11 their breeds which may be kept at any single-family residence other than a breeding kennel licensed  
12 under § 4-13-10, and may enforce those ordinances by pecuniary penalties not exceeding two  
13 hundred fifty dollars (\$250).

14          (3) Coventry town council is authorized to enact ordinances permitting the dog officer in  
15 the town to issue citations to the owners of dogs for the violation of any dog ordinance which may  
16 be paid by mail.

17          (4)(i) Cumberland town council may prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

18           (A) A fine not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the first offense within a calendar year;

19           (B) A fine not exceeding seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) for the second offense within a  
20 calendar year;

21           (C) A fine not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100) for the third and each subsequent  
22 offense within a calendar year.

23          (ii) The town council of the town of Cumberland is authorized to enact an ordinance  
24 permitting the animal control officer or any police officer in that town to issue citations to the  
25 owners of dogs for the violation of any dog ordinance which may be paid by mail.

26          (iii) The town council of the town of Cumberland is authorized to enact an ordinance  
27 establishing the expense of the impoundment of dogs as determined by the town council and  
28 providing for the payment to the town of the impoundment expense by the dog owner prior to  
29 removal of the dog from the pound.

30          (5) Gloucester town council is authorized to enact an ordinance to prescribe pecuniary  
31 penalties as follows:

32           (i) A fine not more than twenty dollars (\$20.00) for the first offense within a calendar year;

33           (ii) A fine not more than thirty dollars (\$30.00) for the second offense within a calendar  
34 year;

1           (iii) A fine not more than thirty-five dollars (\$35.00) for the third offense and each  
2 subsequent offense within a calendar year.

3           (6) Jamestown town council may prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

4           (i) A fine not exceeding twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for the first offense within a calendar  
5 year;

6           (ii) A fine not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the second offense within a calendar  
7 year;

8           (iii) A fine not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100) for the third and each subsequent  
9 offense within a calendar year.

10          (7)(i) Middletown may prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows for the violation of animal  
11 control ordinances on any beach within the town of Middletown:

12          (A) A fine not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100) for the first (1st) offense within the  
13 calendar year;

14          (B) A fine not exceeding one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) for the second (2nd) offense  
15 within a calendar year;

16          (C) A fine not exceeding two hundred dollars (\$200) for the third (3rd) and each subsequent  
17 offense within a calendar year.

18          (ii) Middletown may prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows for the violation of animal  
19 control ordinances anywhere else within the town:

20          (A) A fine not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the first offense within a calendar year;

21          (B) A fine not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100) for the second offense within a  
22 calendar year;

23          (C) A fine not exceeding one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) for the third and each subsequent  
24 offense within a calendar year.

25          (iii) The Middletown town council is authorized to enact an ordinance permitting the dog  
26 officer in that town to issue citations to the owners of dogs for the violation of any dog ordinance  
27 which may be paid by mail.

28          (8) Narragansett town council is authorized to enact an ordinance:

29          (i) Permitting the animal control officer in the town to issue citations to the owners of dogs  
30 for the violation of any animal control ordinance which may be paid by mail; and

31          (ii) Establishing the expense of the impoundment of dogs as determined by the town  
32 council and providing for the payment to the town of the impoundment expense by the dog owner  
33 prior to removal of the dog from the pound; and

34          (iii) Prescribing pecuniary penalties as follows:

1           (A) A fine of not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for the first offense within a  
2     calendar year;

3           (B) A fine of not more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the second offense within a calendar  
4     year;

5           (C) A fine of not more than seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) for the third and each subsequent  
6     offense within a calendar year.

7           (9) Newport city council is authorized to enact an ordinance:

8           (i) Permitting the animal control officer, and his or her agents, in that city to issue citations  
9     to the owners of dogs for violation of any animal control ordinance which may be paid by mail;

10          (ii) To prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

11          (A) A fine of not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for the first offense within a  
12     calendar year;

13          (B) A fine of not more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the second offense within a calendar  
14     year;

15          (C) A fine of not more than one hundred dollars (\$100) for the third and each subsequent  
16     offense within a calendar year.

17          (10) North Providence town council is authorized to enact an ordinance permitting the  
18     animal control officer in that town to issue citations to the owners of dogs for the violation of any  
19     dog ordinance which may be paid by mail.

20          (11)(i) Portsmouth may prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

21          (A) A fine not exceeding twenty dollars (\$20.00) for the first offense within a calendar  
22     year;

23          (B) A fine not exceeding thirty dollars (\$30.00) for the second offense within a calendar  
24     year;

25          (C) A fine not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the third and each subsequent offense  
26     within a calendar year.

27          (ii) The Portsmouth town council is authorized to enact an ordinance permitting the dog  
28     officer in that town to issue citations to the owners of dogs for the violation of any dog ordinance  
29     which may be paid by mail.

30          (iii) The Portsmouth town council may, by ordinance, prescribe the number of licensed  
31     dogs which may be kept at any single-family residence other than a breeding kennel licensed under  
32     § 4-13-10 and may enforce those ordinances by pecuniary penalties not exceeding twenty-five  
33     dollars (\$25.00).

34          (12) The Richmond town council is authorized to enact ordinances:

1 (i) Establishing the following penalties for animal control offenses:

2 (A) A fine of not more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the first offense within one year;

3 (B) A fine of not more than seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) for the second offense within one

4 year of the first offense;

5 (C) A fine of not more than one hundred dollars (\$100) for the third and each subsequent

6 offense within one year of the first offense.

7 (ii) Permitting the animal control officer or any police officer to issue citations for violation

8 of any animal control ordinance punishable by a fine of five hundred dollars (\$500) or less, and to

9 provide for payment of those fines by mail.

10 (13)(i) Scituate town council may prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

11 (A) A fine not exceeding twenty dollars (\$20.00) for the first offense within a calendar

12 year;

13 (B) A fine not exceeding thirty dollars (\$30.00) for the second offense within a calendar

14 year;

15 (C) A fine not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the third and each subsequent offense

16 within a calendar year.

17 (ii) Scituate town council is authorized to enact ordinances permitting the dog officer in

18 the town to issue citations to the owners of dogs for the violation of any dog ordinance which may

19 be paid by mail.

20 (14) Smithfield town council is authorized to enact an ordinance:

21 (i) Permitting the animal control officer in the town to issue citations to the owners of dogs

22 for the violation of any animal control ordinance which may be paid by mail; and

23 (ii) To prescribe penalties for violation of the provisions of revised general ordinances,

24 town of Smithfield, Rhode Island 2003, as amended, chapter 126, entitled “animals”.

25 (15) Tiverton town council may prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

26 (i) A fine not exceeding twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for the first offense;

27 (ii) A fine not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the second offense;

28 (iii) A fine not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100) for the third and each subsequent

29 offense.

30 (16) Warwick city council may prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

31 (i) A fine not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the first offense within a calendar year;

32 (ii) A fine not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100) for the second offense within a

33 calendar year;

34 (iii) A fine not exceeding two hundred dollars (\$200) for the third and each subsequent

1 offense within a calendar year; and

2 (iv) A fine not exceeding three hundred dollars (\$300) for the fourth and each subsequent

3 offense within a calendar year.

4 (17) Westerly town council is authorized to enact an ordinance:

5 (i) Permitting the animal control officer in the town to issue citations to the owners of dogs

6 for the violation of any animal control ordinance which may be paid by mail; and

7 (ii) Establishing the expense of the impoundment of dogs as determined by the town

8 council and providing for the payment to the town of the impoundment expense by the dog owner

9 prior to removal of the dog from the pound; and

10 (iii) Prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

11 (A) A fine of not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for the first offense within a

12 calendar year;

13 (B) A fine of not more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the second offense within a calendar

14 year;

15 (C) A fine of not more than one hundred dollars (\$100) for the third and each subsequent

16 offense within a calendar year.

17 (18) West Greenwich town council is authorized to enact an ordinance:

18 (i) Permitting the animal control officer in the town to issue citations to the owners of dogs

19 for the violation of any animal control ordinance which may be paid by mail; and

20 (ii) Establishing the expense of the impoundment of dogs as determined by the town

21 council and providing for the payment to the town of the impoundment expense by the dog owner

22 prior to removal of the dog from the pound; and

23 (iii) Prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

24 (A) A fine of not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for the first offense within a

25 calendar year;

26 (B) A fine of not more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the second offense within a calendar

27 year;

28 (C) A fine of not more than one hundred dollars (\$100) for the third and each subsequent

29 offense within a calendar year.

30 (19) The town council of the town of Exeter is authorized to enact any ordinance

31 prescribing fines and penalties, in addition to those otherwise allowed by law, as follows:

32 (i) Providing a fine of up to twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for the first offense;

33 (ii) Providing a fine of up to one hundred dollars (\$100) for the second offense; and

34 (iii) Providing a fine of up to two hundred dollars (\$200) for the third and for any

subsequent offenses within a one-year period. In addition, the town may require proof of owners liability insurance for a twelve-month (12) period insuring against injury and damages caused by the dog. That insurance shall be in the amount of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) and shall name the town as a named insured for the purposes of notice.

(20) West Warwick town council may prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

(i) A fine not exceeding fifteen dollars (\$15.00) for the first offense;

(ii) A fine not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the second offense;

(iii) A fine not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100) for the third and each subsequent offense.

(21) Woonsocket city council is authorized to enact an ordinance:

(i) Permitting the animal control office of the city to issue citations to the owners of dogs for the violation of any animal control ordinance which may be paid by mail;

(ii) Establishing the expense of the impoundment of dogs as determined by the city council and providing for the payment to the city for the impoundment expense by the dog owner prior to removal of the dog from the pound; and

(iii) Prescribing pecuniary penalties as follows:

(A) A fine of not more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the first offense within a calendar year;

(B) A fine of not more than one hundred dollars (\$100) for the second offense within a calendar year;

(C) A fine of not more than one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) for the third and each subsequent offense within a calendar year.

(22) Pawtucket city council is authorized to prescribe pecuniary penalties directly related to its ordinance banning the owning or keeping of pit bulls in the city as follows:

(i) For a pit bull properly licensed according to the city ordinance:

(A) A fine not exceeding two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for the first offense;

(B) A fine not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500) on a second offense;

(C) A fine not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000) on a third offense.

(ii) For a pit bull that is not licensed pursuant to the exceptions in the city ordinance:

(A) A fine not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500) on a first offense;

(B) A fine not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000) on a second or subsequent offense.

(iii) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, Pawtucket may through its municipal court impose a sentence of imprisonment not exceeding thirty (30) days in addition to the fines in subsection (b)(22)(ii)(A) or (B).

1           (23)(i) The Lincoln town council is authorized to prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

2           (A) A fine of not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for the first offense within a

3 calendar year;

4           (B) A fine of not more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the second offense within a calendar

5 year;

6           (C) A fine of not more than one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125) for the third and each

7 subsequent offense within a calendar year.

8           (ii) The Lincoln town council is authorized to enact an ordinance permitting the dog officer

9 and police officers in that town to issue citations to the owners of dogs for the violation of any dog

10 ordinance, which citation may be paid by mail.

11           (24) The East Providence city council is authorized to enact an ordinance permitting the

12 animal control officer or any police officer in that city to issue citations to persons in violation of

13 any animal ordinances, which may be paid by mail, and to prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

14           (i) A fine of not more than thirty dollars (\$30.00) for the first offense within a calendar

15 year;

16           (ii) A fine of not more than sixty dollars (\$60.00) for the second offense within a calendar

17 year;

18           (iii) A fine of not more than one hundred twenty dollars (\$120) for the third offense within

19 a calendar year; and

20           (iv) A fine of not more than three hundred dollars (\$300) for the fourth offense and any

21 subsequent offense within a calendar year.

22           (25) The Warren town council is authorized to enact an ordinance permitting the animal

23 control officer in the town to issue citations to the owners of animals for violation of any animal

24 control ordinance which may be paid by mail, and to prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

25           (i) A fine of not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for the first offense within a

26 calendar year;

27           (ii) A fine of not more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the second offense within a calendar

28 year;

29           (iii) A fine of not more than one hundred dollars (\$100) for the third and each subsequent

30 offense within a calendar year.

31           (26) The Burrillville town council is authorized to enact an ordinance:

32           (i) Permitting the animal control officer in the town to issue citations to the owners of dogs

33 for the violation of any animal control ordinance which may be paid by mail; and

34           (ii) To prescribe penalties for violation of the provisions of revised general ordinances,



1 Town of Burrillville, Rhode Island, 2004, as amended, Chapter 4, entitled “Animals”; and  
2 (iii) Establishing an expense not to exceed ten dollars (\$10.00) for the day during which  
3 impoundment occurs plus five dollars (\$5.00) every day the animal is detained and providing for  
4 the payment to the town of the impoundment expense by the dog owner prior to removal of the dog  
5 from the animal control facility.

6 (27) The Foster town council is authorized to enact ordinances permitting the dog officer  
7 in the town to issue citations to the owners of dogs for the violation of any dog ordinance, which  
8 may be paid by mail, and may prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

9 (i) A fine not exceeding twenty dollars (\$20.00) for the first offense within a calendar year;

10 (ii) A fine not exceeding thirty dollars (\$30.00) for the second offense within a calendar  
11 year;

12 (iii) A fine not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the third and each subsequent offense  
13 within a calendar year.

14 (28) The Hopkinton town council is authorized to enact ordinances permitting the dog  
15 officer in the town to issue citations to the owners of dogs for the violation of any dog ordinance,  
16 which may be paid by mail, and may prescribe pecuniary penalties as follows:

17 (i) A fine not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the first offense within a calendar year;

18 (ii) A fine not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100) for the second offense within a  
19 calendar year;

20 (iii) A fine not exceeding one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) for the third and each subsequent  
21 offense within a calendar year.

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

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

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- 1           This act would increase the fines for dog ordinance violations in the town of Barrington.
- 2           This act would take effect upon passage.

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