

2025 -- S 0550

=====  
LC001544  
=====

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

—————  
A N A C T

RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- DOGS

Introduced By: Senators Urso, Ciccone, Dimitri, Tikoian, LaMountain, Pearson, Murray,  
DiMario, Sosnowski, Patalano, and Bissailon

Date Introduced: February 26, 2025

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Sections 4-13-13, 4-13-39 and 4-13-42 of the General Laws in Chapter 4-13  
2 entitled "Dogs" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3           **4-13-13. Wrongful removal of collar — Theft or destruction of licensed dogs —**  
4 **Poisoning.**

5           Whoever wrongfully removes the collar from the neck of a dog licensed and collared  
6 according to the provisions of this chapter, or steals a dog licensed or collared, or kills, maims,  
7 entices, carries away, or detains a licensed dog, or distributes or exposes a poisonous substance,  
8 with the intent that the poisonous substance shall be eaten by a licensed dog, shall be punished by  
9 a fine of not less than ~~ten dollars (\$10.00)~~ one hundred dollars (\$100), nor more than ~~one hundred~~  
10 ~~dollars (\$100)~~ one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or be imprisoned not exceeding thirty (30) days, or  
11 both, and shall be liable to the dog's owner for damages in a civil action. For a second or subsequent  
12 violation the fine shall be a minimum of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and not more than five  
13 thousand dollars (\$5,000).

14           **4-13-39. Penalties.**

15           Except where otherwise specified that a violation shall result in a greater penalty ~~Any~~ any  
16 person convicted of a violation of this chapter shall be fined fifty dollars (\$50) for a first offense  
17 and one hundred dollars (\$100) for a second and subsequent offense.

18           **4-13-42. Care of dogs.**

19           (a) It shall be a violation of this section for an owner or keeper to:

1 (1) Keep any dog on a permanent tether that restricts movement of the tethered dog to an  
2 area less than one hundred thirteen square feet (113 sq. ft.), or less than a six foot (6') radius at  
3 ground level.

4 (2) Tether a dog with a choke-type collar, head collar, or prong-type collar. The weight of  
5 any chain or tether shall not exceed one-eighth ( $\frac{1}{8}$ ) of the dog's total body weight.

6 (3) Keep any dog tethered for more than ten (10) hours during a twenty-four-hour (24)  
7 period or keep any dog confined in an area or primary enclosure for more than fourteen (14) hours  
8 during any twenty-four-hour (24) period, and more than ten (10) hours during a twenty-four-hour  
9 (24) period, if the area is not greater than that which is required under the most recently adopted  
10 version of the department of environmental management's rules and regulations governing animal  
11 care facilities.

12 (4) Tether a dog anytime from the hours of ten o'clock p.m. (10:00 p.m.) to six o'clock  
13 a.m. (6:00 a.m.), except for a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes.

14 (5) Keep any dog outside, either tethered or otherwise confined, when the ambient  
15 temperature is beyond the industry standard for the weather safety scale as set forth in the most  
16 recent adopted version of the Tufts Animal Care and Condition Weather Safety Scale (TACC).

17 ~~(6)~~ [\(6\) Intentionally overfeed a dog by a dog breeder for aesthetic reasons or to influence](#)  
18 [the physical appearance of a dog to the detriment of the health and mobility of the dog.](#)

19 (b) It shall be a violation of this section for an owner or keeper to fail to provide a dog with  
20 adequate feed, adequate water, or adequate veterinary care as those terms are defined in § 4-19-2;  
21 provided however, that adequate veterinary care may be provided by an owner using acceptable  
22 animal husbandry practices.

23 [\(c\)](#) Exposing any dog to adverse weather conditions strictly for the purpose of conditioning  
24 shall be prohibited.

25 (d) The provisions of this section, as they relate to the duration and timeframe of tethering  
26 or confinement, shall not apply:

27 (1) If the tethering or confinement is authorized for medical reasons in writing by a  
28 veterinarian licensed in Rhode Island, the authorization is renewed annually, and shelter is  
29 provided;

30 (2) If tethering or confinement is authorized in writing by an animal control officer, or duly  
31 sworn police officer assigned to the animal control division, for the purposes of, including, but not  
32 limited to, hunting dogs, dogs protecting livestock, and sled dogs. Written authorization must be  
33 renewed annually. The written authorization issued by an animal control officer or duly sworn  
34 police officer assigned to the animal control division in the political subdivision of the state where

1 the dogs are kept shall be considered valid in every other political subdivision of the state. The  
2 written authorization issued by an animal control officer or duly sworn police officer assigned to  
3 the animal control division in the political subdivision of the state where the dogs are kept is  
4 revocable by that animal control officer or police officer if there are any conditions present that  
5 warrant revocation. The conditions include, but are not limited to, changes in the number or type  
6 of dogs, changes in the facility structure or safety, and changes in the health of the dog;

7 (3) To any entity licensed by the state pursuant to chapter 19 of title 4, or any veterinary  
8 facility; or

9 (4) [Deleted by P.L. 2018, ch. 118, § 1 and P.L. 2018, ch. 198, § 1.]

10 (5) [Deleted by P.L. 2018, ch. 118, § 1 and P.L. 2018, ch. 198, § 1.]

11 (6) To an exhibitor holding a class C license under the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. §  
12 2133) that are temporarily in the state, if authorized by the department of environmental  
13 management (DEM).

14 (7) [Deleted by P.L. 2018, ch. 118, § 1 and P.L. 2018, ch. 198, § 1.]

15 (e) Any person in violation of this section shall be imprisoned not exceeding eleven (11)  
16 months, or fined not less than one hundred dollars (\$100) nor exceeding one thousand dollars  
17 (\$1,000), or both. Each day of violation shall constitute a separate offense. For a second or  
18 subsequent violation the fine shall be not less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000), nor more than  
19 ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) and up to two (2) years imprisonment.

20 (f) General agents or special agents of the Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of  
21 Cruelty to Animals (RISPCA) are hereby authorized to enforce the provisions of this chapter in  
22 cooperation with animal control officers and the department of environmental management (DEM).

23 SECTION 2. Chapter 4-13 of the General Laws entitled "Dogs" is hereby amended by  
24 adding thereto the following section:

25 **4-13-42.1. Animal care task force.**

26 (a) There is hereby created and established an advisory animal care task force that includes  
27 animal control officers and/or representatives of the twenty-eight (28) animal shelters in Rhode  
28 Island to identify areas of improvement in the care of animals in the state, and to review local  
29 ordinances and state statutes to identify weaknesses, conflicts in the laws and provide  
30 recommendations for legislation to improve care for animals statewide.

31 (b) Appointments to the task force shall be done by the mayor or town administrator where  
32 the shelter is located.

33 (c) The initial meeting of the task force shall be at the call of the governor. Subsequent  
34 meetings shall occur at the call of the chairperson.

1           (d) The department of administration shall provide adequate facilities for the task force to  
2 meet. Administrative support shall also be provided.

3           (e) The chairperson of the task force shall be duly elected by the members. A vote shall  
4 also take place to choose a vice chairperson.

5           (f) Meetings of the task force shall take place on a quarterly basis. An agenda shall be  
6 provided by the chairperson prior to each meeting identifying strategic issues or decisions the task  
7 force needs to provide input on.

8           (g) Reports of the task force shall be provided to the governor, the speaker and president  
9 of the senate on January 1 annually with appropriate recommendations to improve animal care in  
10 the state.

11           (h) The provisions of this section shall sunset and expire on January 1, 2027, unless  
12 extended by the general assembly.

13           SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

=====  
LC001544  
=====

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

\*\*\*

1           This act would increase penalties from one thousand dollars (\$1,000) to five thousand  
2 dollars (\$5,000) for malicious injury to or killing of animals. It would also prohibit the intentional  
3 overfeeding of dogs for aesthetic reasons and increase penalties for violations. An advisory animal  
4 care task force would also be created to identify areas of improvement for care of animals.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

=====  
LC001544  
=====