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HOUSE BILL NO. 2382

Offered January 17, 2017

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 55-248.37:1, relating to the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act; landlord to inspect vacated dwelling unit for abandoned animals; penalty.*

Patron—Lindsey (By Request)

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 55-248.37:1 as follows:

§ 55-248.37:1. Landlord to inspect for abandoned animals; penalty.

A. As used in this section, "abandoned animal" means any companion animal as defined in § 3.2-6500 or specialty pet as defined in § 3.2-4800 that is found in a dwelling unit vacated through termination of tenancy or abandonment or pursuant to an action of unlawful detainer.

B. Within two days after a landlord knows or should have known that a dwelling unit has been vacated through termination of tenancy or abandonment or pursuant to an action of unlawful detainer, the landlord shall inspect the dwelling unit for the presence of any abandoned animals. If the landlord encounters an abandoned animal, he shall immediately notify an animal control officer as defined in § 3.2-6555 or law-enforcement officer as defined in § 9.1-101 of the presence and condition of the animal. A landlord who encounters an abandoned animal under this section shall not be considered the owner or custodian of the animal.

C. Any person who knowingly violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

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