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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 234

Offered January 11, 2017

Prefiled December 2, 2016

Requesting the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to study spay-neuter programs in the Commonwealth. Report.

Patrons—Stanley; Delegate: Kory

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the creation of public and private programs for the spaying and neutering of companion animals has resulted in dramatic declines in the pet population; and

WHEREAS, Virginia law allows localities to incentivize spaying and neutering of companion animals through the localities' licensing programs; and

WHEREAS, Virginia provides funding for spay-neuter programs through the Animal Friendly special license plate program; and

WHEREAS, Virginia allows for voluntary contributions to support spay-neuter programs through the state income tax check-off system; and

WHEREAS, support for spay-neuter programs in Virginia is managed by a variety of state and local agencies; and

WHEREAS, the present system, composed of a variety of spay-neuter programs, lacks accountability and makes comprehensive data collection difficult; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services be requested to study spay-neuter programs in the Commonwealth.

In conducting its study, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (the Department) shall review the effectiveness of public and private spay-neuter programs in the Commonwealth, the availability of spay-neuter services in low-income communities, and the operation of Virginia's Animal Friendly license plate program and shall assess the feasibility of establishing a statewide system for promoting and funding the spaying and neutering of companion animals.

The State Veterinarian shall appoint a board of advisors to assist the Department in its study. The board of advisors shall include representatives of the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies, the Virginia Farm Bureau, the Virginia Animal Control Association, public and private animal shelters, and citizens experienced in animal welfare issues.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department for this study, upon request.

The Department shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2017; shall report its findings and recommendations to the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources and the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources by December 1, 2017; and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the 2018 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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