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## HOUSE BILL NO. 646

Offered January 10, 2018

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A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 3.2-6500 and 3.2-6543 of the Code of Virginia, relating to tethering of animals.

Patrons—Bell, John J., Kory, Ayala, Boysko, Carr, Heretick, James, Jones, J.C., Lindsey, Murphy, VanValkenburg and Yancey

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That §§ 3.2-6500 and 3.2-6543 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

**§ 3.2-6500. Definitions.**

As used in this chapter unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Abandon" means to desert, forsake, or absolutely give up an animal without having secured another owner or custodian for the animal or by failing to provide the elements of basic care as set forth in § 3.2-6503 for a period of five consecutive days.

"Adequate care" or "care" means the responsible practice of good animal husbandry, handling, production, management, confinement, feeding, watering, protection, shelter, transportation, treatment, and, when necessary, euthanasia, appropriate for the age, species, condition, size and type of the animal and the provision of veterinary care when needed to prevent suffering or impairment of health.

"Adequate exercise" or "exercise" means the opportunity for the animal to move sufficiently to maintain normal muscle tone and mass for the age, species, size, and condition of the animal.

"Adequate feed" means access to and the provision of food that is of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain each animal in good health; is accessible to each animal; is prepared so as to permit ease of consumption for the age, species, condition, size and type of each animal; is provided in a clean and sanitary manner; is placed so as to minimize contamination by excrement and pests; and is provided at suitable intervals for the species, age, and condition of the animal, but at least once daily, except as prescribed by a veterinarian or as dictated by naturally occurring states of hibernation or fasting normal for the species.

"Adequate shelter" means provision of and access to shelter that is suitable for the species, age, condition, size, and type of each animal; provides adequate space for each animal; is safe and protects each animal from injury, rain, sleet, snow, hail, direct sunlight, the adverse effects of heat or cold, physical suffering, and impairment of health; is properly lighted; is properly cleaned; enables each animal to be clean and dry, except when detrimental to the species; and, for dogs and cats, provides a solid surface, resting platform, pad, floormat, or similar device that is large enough for the animal to lie on in a normal manner and can be maintained in a sanitary manner. Under this chapter, shelters whose wire, grid, or slat floors: (i) permit the animals' feet to pass through the openings; (ii) sag under the animals' weight; or (iii) otherwise do not protect the animals' feet or toes from injury are not adequate shelter. *The outdoor tethering of an animal shall not constitute the provision of adequate shelter when it is conducted (a) between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., unless the animal is actively engaged in conduct that is directly related to agricultural activity on property whose zoning classification, if any, permits such agricultural activity; (b) when no owner is on the property; (c) when the actual or effective outdoor temperature is 32 degrees Fahrenheit or lower, or 85 degrees Fahrenheit or higher; (d) during a heat advisory issued by a local or state authority; or (e) during the effective period for a severe weather warning issued for the area by the National Weather Service, including a hurricane warning, tropical storm warning, or tornado warning.*

"Adequate space" means sufficient space to allow each animal to: (i) easily stand, sit, lie, turn about, and make all other normal body movements in a comfortable, normal position for the animal; and (ii) interact safely with other animals in the enclosure. When an animal is tethered, "adequate space" means ~~a that~~ the tether ~~that~~ to which the animal is attached permits the above actions and is appropriate to the age and size of the animal; is attached to the animal by a properly applied collar, halter, or harness ~~that~~ is configured so as to protect the animal from injury and prevent the animal or tether from becoming entangled with other objects or animals, or from extending over an object or edge that could result in the strangulation or injury of the animal; ~~and~~ is at least ~~three~~ 15 feet in length or four times the length of the animal, as measured from the tip of its nose to the base of its tail, *whichever is greater*, except when the animal is being walked on a leash or is attached by a tether to a lead line; *does not, by its material, size, or weight or any other characteristic, cause injury or pain to the animal; does not weigh*

58 *more than one-tenth of the animal's body weight; and does not have weights or other heavy objects*  
59 *attached to it or contain metal chain links.* When freedom of movement would endanger the animal,  
60 temporarily and appropriately restricting movement of the animal according to professionally accepted  
61 standards for the species is considered provision of adequate space.

62 "Adequate water" means provision of and access to clean, fresh, potable water of a drinkable  
63 temperature that is provided in a suitable manner, in sufficient volume, and at suitable intervals  
64 appropriate for the weather and temperature, to maintain normal hydration for the age, species,  
65 condition, size and type of each animal, except as prescribed by a veterinarian or as dictated by  
66 naturally occurring states of hibernation or fasting normal for the species; and is provided in clean,  
67 durable receptacles that are accessible to each animal and are placed so as to minimize contamination of  
68 the water by excrement and pests or an alternative source of hydration consistent with generally  
69 accepted husbandry practices.

70 "Adoption" means the transfer of ownership of a dog or a cat, or any other companion animal, from  
71 a releasing agency to an individual.

72 "Agricultural animals" means all livestock and poultry.

73 "Ambient temperature" means the temperature surrounding the animal.

74 "Animal" means any nonhuman vertebrate species except fish. For the purposes of § 3.2-6522, animal  
75 means any species susceptible to rabies. For the purposes of § 3.2-6570, animal means any nonhuman  
76 vertebrate species including fish except those fish captured and killed or disposed of in a reasonable and  
77 customary manner.

78 "Animal control officer" means a person appointed as an animal control officer or deputy animal  
79 control officer as provided in § 3.2-6555.

80 "Boarding establishment" means a place or establishment other than a public or private animal shelter  
81 where companion animals not owned by the proprietor are sheltered, fed, and watered in exchange for a  
82 fee.

83 "Collar" means a well-fitted device, appropriate to the age and size of the animal, attached to the  
84 animal's neck in such a way as to prevent trauma or injury to the animal.

85 "Commercial dog breeder" means any person who, during any 12-month period, maintains 30 or  
86 more adult female dogs for the primary purpose of the sale of their offspring as companion animals.

87 "Companion animal" means any domestic or feral dog, domestic or feral cat, nonhuman primate,  
88 guinea pig, hamster, rabbit not raised for human food or fiber, exotic or native animal, reptile, exotic or  
89 native bird, or any feral animal or any animal under the care, custody, or ownership of a person or any  
90 animal that is bought, sold, traded, or bartered by any person. Agricultural animals, game species, or any  
91 animals regulated under federal law as research animals shall not be considered companion animals for  
92 the purposes of this chapter.

93 "Consumer" means any natural person purchasing an animal from a dealer or pet shop or hiring the  
94 services of a boarding establishment. The term "consumer" shall not include a business or corporation  
95 engaged in sales or services.

96 "Dealer" means any person who in the regular course of business for compensation or profit buys,  
97 sells, transfers, exchanges, or barter companion animals. The following shall not be considered dealers:  
98 (i) any person who transports companion animals in the regular course of business as a common carrier  
99 or (ii) any person whose primary purpose is to find permanent adoptive homes for companion animals.

100 "Direct and immediate threat" means any clear and imminent danger to an animal's health, safety or  
101 life.

102 "Dump" means to knowingly desert, forsake, or absolutely give up without having secured another  
103 owner or custodian any dog, cat, or other companion animal in any public place including the  
104 right-of-way of any public highway, road or street or on the property of another.

105 "Emergency veterinary treatment" means veterinary treatment to stabilize a life-threatening condition,  
106 alleviate suffering, prevent further disease transmission, or prevent further disease progression.

107 "Enclosure" means a structure used to house or restrict animals from running at large.

108 "Euthanasia" means the humane destruction of an animal accomplished by a method that involves  
109 instantaneous unconsciousness and immediate death or by a method that involves anesthesia, produced  
110 by an agent that causes painless loss of consciousness, and death during such loss of consciousness.

111 "Exhibitor" means any person who has animals for or on public display, excluding an exhibitor  
112 licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

113 "Facility" means a building or portion thereof as designated by the State Veterinarian, other than a  
114 private residential dwelling and its surrounding grounds, that is used to contain a primary enclosure or  
115 enclosures in which animals are housed or kept.

116 "Farming activity" means, consistent with standard animal husbandry practices, the raising,  
117 management, and use of agricultural animals to provide food, fiber, or transportation and the breeding,  
118 exhibition, lawful recreational use, marketing, transportation, and slaughter of agricultural animals  
119 pursuant to such purposes.

120 "Foster care provider" means a person who provides care or rehabilitation for companion animals  
 121 through an affiliation with a public or private animal shelter, home-based rescue, releasing agency, or  
 122 other animal welfare organization.

123 "Foster home" means a private residential dwelling and its surrounding grounds, or any facility other  
 124 than a public or private animal shelter, at which site through an affiliation with a public or private  
 125 animal shelter, home-based rescue, releasing agency, or other animal welfare organization care or  
 126 rehabilitation is provided for companion animals.

127 "Groomer" means any person who, for a fee, cleans, trims, brushes, makes neat, manicures, or treats  
 128 for external parasites any animal.

129 "Home-based rescue" means an animal welfare organization that takes custody of companion animals  
 130 for the purpose of facilitating adoption and houses such companion animals in a foster home or a  
 131 system of foster homes.

132 "Humane" means any action taken in consideration of and with the intent to provide for the animal's  
 133 health and well-being.

134 "Humane investigator" means a person who has been appointed by a circuit court as a humane  
 135 investigator as provided in § 3.2-6558.

136 "Humane society" means any incorporated, nonprofit organization that is organized for the purposes  
 137 of preventing cruelty to animals and promoting humane care and treatment or adoptions of animals.

138 "Incorporated" means organized and maintained as a legal entity in the Commonwealth.

139 "Kennel" means any establishment in which five or more canines, felines, or hybrids of either are  
 140 kept for the purpose of breeding, hunting, training, renting, buying, boarding, selling, or showing.

141 "Law-enforcement officer" means any person who is a full-time or part-time employee of a police  
 142 department or sheriff's office that is part of or administered by the Commonwealth or any political  
 143 subdivision thereof and who is responsible for the prevention and detection of crime and the  
 144 enforcement of the penal, traffic or highway laws of the Commonwealth. Part-time employees are  
 145 compensated officers who are not full-time employees as defined by the employing police department or  
 146 sheriff's office.

147 "Livestock" includes all domestic or domesticated: bovine animals; equine animals; ovine animals;  
 148 porcine animals; cervidae animals; capradae animals; animals of the genus Lama; ratites; fish or shellfish  
 149 in aquaculture facilities, as defined in § 3.2-2600; enclosed domesticated rabbits or hares raised for  
 150 human food or fiber; or any other individual animal specifically raised for food or fiber, except  
 151 companion animals.

152 "New owner" means an individual who is legally competent to enter into a binding agreement  
 153 pursuant to subdivision B 2 of § 3.2-6574, and who adopts or receives a dog or cat from a releasing  
 154 agency.

155 "Ordinance" means any law, rule, regulation, or ordinance adopted by the governing body of any  
 156 locality.

157 "Other officer" includes all other persons employed or elected by the people of Virginia, or by any  
 158 locality, whose duty it is to preserve the peace, to make arrests, or to enforce the law.

159 "Owner" means any person who: (i) has a right of property in an animal; (ii) keeps or harbors an  
 160 animal; (iii) has an animal in his care; or (iv) acts as a custodian of an animal.

161 "Pet shop" means an establishment where companion animals are bought, sold, exchanged, or offered  
 162 for sale or exchange to the general public.

163 "Poultry" includes all domestic fowl and game birds raised in captivity.

164 "Primary enclosure" means any structure used to immediately restrict an animal or animals to a  
 165 limited amount of space, such as a room, pen, cage, compartment, or hutch. For tethered animals, the  
 166 term includes the shelter and the area within reach of the tether.

167 "Private animal shelter" means a facility operated for the purpose of finding permanent adoptive  
 168 homes for animals that is used to house or contain animals and that is owned or operated by an  
 169 incorporated, nonprofit, and nongovernmental entity, including a humane society, animal welfare  
 170 organization, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, or any other similar organization.

171 "Properly cleaned" means that carcasses, debris, food waste, and excrement are removed from the  
 172 primary enclosure with sufficient frequency to minimize the animals' contact with the above-mentioned  
 173 contaminants; the primary enclosure is sanitized with sufficient frequency to minimize odors and the  
 174 hazards of disease; and the primary enclosure is cleaned so as to prevent the animals confined therein  
 175 from being directly or indirectly sprayed with the stream of water, or directly or indirectly exposed to  
 176 hazardous chemicals or disinfectants.

177 "Properly lighted" when referring to a facility means sufficient illumination to permit routine  
 178 inspections, maintenance, cleaning, and housekeeping of the facility, and observation of the animals; to  
 179 provide regular diurnal lighting cycles of either natural or artificial light, uniformly diffused throughout  
 180 the facility; and to promote the well-being of the animals.

181 "Properly lighted" when referring to a private residential dwelling and its surrounding grounds means  
182 sufficient illumination to permit routine maintenance and cleaning thereof, and observation of the  
183 companion animals; and to provide regular diurnal lighting cycles of either natural or artificial light to  
184 promote the well-being of the animals.

185 "Public animal shelter" means a facility operated by the Commonwealth, or any locality, for the  
186 purpose of impounding or sheltering seized, stray, homeless, abandoned, unwanted, or surrendered  
187 animals or a facility operated for the same purpose under a contract with any locality.

188 "Releasing agency" means (i) a public animal shelter or (ii) a private animal shelter, humane society,  
189 animal welfare organization, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, or other similar entity or  
190 home-based rescue that releases companion animals for adoption.

191 "Research facility" means any place, laboratory, or institution licensed by the U.S. Department of  
192 Agriculture at which scientific tests, experiments, or investigations involving the use of living animals  
193 are carried out, conducted, or attempted.

194 "Sanitize" means to make physically clean and to remove and destroy, to a practical minimum,  
195 agents injurious to health.

196 "Sore" means, when referring to an equine, that an irritating or blistering agent has been applied,  
197 internally or externally, by a person to any limb or foot of an equine; any burn, cut, or laceration that  
198 has been inflicted by a person to any limb or foot of an equine; any tack, nail, screw, or chemical agent  
199 that has been injected by a person into or used by a person on any limb or foot of an equine; any other  
200 substance or device that has been used by a person on any limb or foot of an equine; or a person has  
201 engaged in a practice involving an equine, and as a result of such application, infliction, injection, use,  
202 or practice, such equine suffers, or can reasonably be expected to suffer, physical pain or distress,  
203 inflammation, or lameness when walking, trotting, or otherwise moving, except that such term does not  
204 include such an application, infliction, injection, use, or practice in connection with the therapeutic  
205 treatment of an equine by or under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian. Notwithstanding anything  
206 contained herein to the contrary, nothing shall preclude the shoeing, use of pads, and use of action  
207 devices as permitted by 9 C.F.R. Part 11.2.

208 "Sterilize" or "sterilization" means a surgical or chemical procedure performed by a licensed  
209 veterinarian that renders a dog or cat permanently incapable of reproducing.

210 "Treasurer" includes the treasurer and his assistants of each county or city or other officer designated  
211 by law to collect taxes in such county or city.

212 "Treatment" or "adequate treatment" means the responsible handling or transportation of animals in  
213 the person's ownership, custody or charge, appropriate for the age, species, condition, size and type of  
214 the animal.

215 "Veterinary treatment" means treatment by or on the order of a duly licensed veterinarian.

216 "Weaned" means that an animal is capable of and physiologically accustomed to ingestion of solid  
217 food or food customary for the adult of the species and has ingested such food, without nursing, for a  
218 period of at least five days.

219 **§ 3.2-6543. Governing body of any locality may adopt certain ordinances.**

220 A. The governing body of any locality of the Commonwealth may adopt, and make more stringent,  
221 ordinances that parallel §§ 3.2-6503, 3.2-6521 through 3.2-6539, 3.2-6546 through 3.2-6555, 3.2-6562,  
222 3.2-6569, 3.2-6570, 3.2-6574 through 3.2-6580, and 3.2-6585 through 3.2-6590. Any town may choose  
223 to adopt by reference any ordinance of the surrounding county adopted under this section to be applied  
224 within its town limits, in lieu of adopting an ordinance of its own.

225 Any funds collected pursuant to the enforcement of ordinances adopted pursuant to the provisions of  
226 this section may be used for the purpose of defraying the costs of local animal control, including efforts  
227 to promote sterilization of cats and dogs.

228 B. Any locality may, by ordinance, establish uniform schedules of civil penalties for violations of  
229 specific provisions of ordinances adopted pursuant to this section. Civil penalties may not be imposed  
230 for violations of ordinances that parallel § 3.2-6570. Designation of a particular violation for a civil  
231 penalty shall be in lieu of criminal sanctions and preclude prosecution of such violation as a criminal  
232 misdemeanor. The schedule for civil penalties shall be uniform for each type of specified violation and  
233 the penalty for any one violation shall not be more than \$150. Imposition of civil penalties shall not  
234 preclude an action for injunctive, declaratory or other equitable relief. Moneys raised pursuant to this  
235 subsection shall be placed in the locality's general fund.

236 An animal control officer or law-enforcement officer may issue a summons for a violation. Any  
237 person summoned or issued a ticket for a scheduled violation may make an appearance in person or in  
238 writing by mail to the department of finance or the treasurer of the locality issuing the summons or  
239 ticket prior to the date fixed for trial in court. Any person so appearing may enter a waiver of trial,  
240 admit liability, and pay the civil penalty established for the offense charged.