

## Alabama Bill Would Require Pet Sterilization

**Proposal relates to privately owned cats and dogs older than 6 months.**

Posted: April 6, 2009, 5 a.m. EDT

Privately owned dogs and cats within the state of Alabama would need to be spayed or neutered under a bill introduced by Senator Del Marsh.

Senate Bill 554 relates to dogs and cats who are 6 months of age and older. It provides for civil fines as well as certain exceptions.

If enacted, SB 554 will provide that an owner of an unsterilized dog 6 months of age or older who is the subject of a complaint may be cited and, in addition to any fine, pay civil penalties as follows: \$50 on the first occurrence; \$100 on the second occurrence; On the third occurrence, require sterilization of the dog. For cat owners, sterilization will be required on second occurrence.

The bill defines "complaint" as any oral or written complaint to a local animal control agency that "alleges that the dog or cat or the owner of the dog or cat has violated this act, any other provision of state law that relates to dogs or cats, or a local animal control ordinance."

"Complaint" also means the observation by an employee or officer of a local animal control agency of behavior by a dog or cat or owner of a pet that violates this act, any other provision of state law that relate[s] to dogs or cats, or a local animal control ordinance. "Complaint" will not include an allegation of excessive noise or barking.

Owners would be exempt from the act if the dog or cat: Is a breed approved by and is registered with a recognized registry or association, and is actively used to show or compete and has competed in at least one show or sporting competition hosted by or under the approval of the recognized registry or association within the past two years; Is being trained or groomed to show or compete and is too young to have yet competed; Has earned or is in the process of earning a title, such as agility or herding; Is trained or in training for use in law enforcement, military, or rescue; By letter from a licensed veterinarian, has been certified to be temporarily or permanently deferred because of age or health or any other valid reason.

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