

Tennessee to Allow Dogs in Outdoor Dining Areas

Proposed legislation to allow dogs in outdoor areas overwhelmingly passes state Senate.

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Tennessee wants to let the dogs out in designated outdoor dining areas under a bill that cleared the state Senate.

Under the legislation, Senate Bill 0605, the presence of pet dogs would be allowed in outdoor areas of restaurants. As introduced, the bill authorizes cities with a population of at least 100,000 to establish an ordinance and permitting process that would enable restaurants to allow the admittance of patron pet dogs into designated outdoor dining areas.

The ordinance must provide adequate controls to ensure compliance with the Tennessee Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act and any other applicable statutes or ordinances. The ordinance, by Sen. Tim Burchett, also includes the following provisions: No pet dog may be present in the interior of any restaurant or in any area where food is prepared.

The restaurant has the right to refuse to serve the owner of a pet dog if the person fails to exercise reasonable control over the dog or the dog is otherwise behaving in a manner that compromises or threatens to compromise the health or safety of any person in the restaurant.

All public food service establishment employees must wash their hands promptly after touching, petting or otherwise handling a dog. Employees must be prohibited from touching, petting or otherwise handling dogs while serving food or beverages or handling tableware or before entering other parts of the public food service establishment.

Patrons must keep their pet dogs on a leash at all times and keep their dogs under reasonable control.

Dogs are not allowed on chairs, tables or other furnishings.

Accidents involving dog waste must be cleaned immediately and the area sanitized with an approved product. A kit with the proper materials for this purpose must be kept near the designated outdoor area.

The measure was approved 28-0.