

## Alabama Proposes Dangerous Dog Laws

**Under proposed legislation, officials could take dangerous dogs into custody immediately.**

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Two lawmakers in Alabama are seeking to close a loophole in state law by sponsoring legislation that would allow law enforcement officials to take dangerous dogs into custody without prior approval from a court.

Under current state law, officials can't take an animal into custody without court approval, a process that usually takes 20 to 30 days.

However, under legislation sponsored by Sen. Myron Penn, D-Union Springs, and Rep. Cam Ward, R-Alabaster, law enforcement could immediately impound dogs at the owner's expense if they determine the animal poses an immediate threat.

Animal control officers would also be allowed to destroy a dog after 10 days if it severely injures or kills a person and if the officers believe the owner knew the dog had a propensity for violence. The 10-day holding period would give the owner time to request a due process hearing.

Also under the bill, dog owners could be charged with a Class C felony if a dog kills or severely wounds a human, plus a Class A misdemeanor if the owner failed to take steps to prevent it.

Owners of a dog classified as dangerous could either have it destroyed, or, in less severe cases, choose to keep it confined and spay or neuter it.

The bill defines a dangerous dog as "a dog, regardless of its breed, that has bitten, attacked or injured a person or domestic animal without provocation."

A similar bill, the Dangerous Dog Act of 2006 passed Alabama's House Judiciary Committee last year, but never made it to the full House due to lack of support.