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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

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A N A C T

RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- DOGS

Introduced By: Representatives O'Brien, Craven, Finkelman, Solomon, McEntee, Serpa,
Lima, Costantino, Voas, and Slater

Date Introduced: March 22, 2024

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 4-13-42 of the General Laws in Chapter 4-13 entitled "Dogs" is
2 hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **4-13-42. Care of dogs.**

4 (a) It shall be a violation of this section for an owner or keeper to:

5 (1) Keep any dog on a permanent tether that restricts movement of the tethered dog to an
6 area less than one hundred thirteen square feet (113 sq. ft.), or less than a six foot (6') radius at
7 ground level.

8 (2) Tether a dog with a choke-type collar, head collar, or prong-type collar. The weight of
9 any chain or tether shall not exceed one-eighth ($\frac{1}{8}$) of the dog's total body weight.

10 (3) Keep any dog tethered for more than ten (10) hours during a twenty-four-hour (24)
11 period or keep any dog confined in an area or primary enclosure for more than fourteen (14) hours
12 during any twenty-four-hour (24) period, and more than ten (10) hours during a twenty-four-hour
13 (24) period, if the area is not greater than that which is required under the most recently adopted
14 version of the department of environmental management's rules and regulations governing animal
15 care facilities.

16 (4) Tether a dog anytime from the hours of ten o'clock p.m. (10:00 p.m.) to six o'clock
17 a.m. (6:00 a.m.), except for a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes.

18 (5) Keep any dog outside, either tethered or otherwise confined, when the ambient
19 temperature is beyond the industry standard for the weather safety scale as set forth in the most

1 recent adopted version of the Tufts Animal Care and Condition Weather Safety Scale (TACC).

2 (b) It shall be a violation of this section for an owner or keeper to fail to provide a dog with
3 adequate feed, adequate water, or adequate veterinary care as those terms are defined in § 4-19-2;
4 provided however, that adequate veterinary care may be provided by an owner using acceptable
5 animal husbandry practices.

6 (c) Exposing any dog to adverse weather conditions strictly for the purpose of conditioning
7 shall be prohibited.

8 (d) The provisions of this section, as they relate to the duration and timeframe of tethering
9 or confinement, shall not apply:

10 (1) If the tethering or confinement is authorized for medical reasons in writing by a
11 veterinarian licensed in Rhode Island, the authorization is renewed annually, and shelter is
12 provided;

13 (2) If tethering or confinement is authorized in writing by an animal control officer, or duly
14 sworn police officer assigned to the animal control division, for the purposes, including, but not
15 limited to, hunting dogs, dogs protecting livestock, and sled dogs. Written authorization must be
16 renewed annually. The written authorization issued by an animal control officer or duly sworn
17 police officer assigned to the animal control division in the political subdivision of the state where
18 the dogs are kept shall be considered valid in every other political subdivision of the state. The
19 written authorization issued by an animal control officer or duly sworn police officer assigned to
20 the animal control division in the political subdivision of the state where the dogs are kept is
21 revocable by that animal control officer or police officer if there are any conditions present that
22 warrant revocation. The conditions include, but are not limited to, changes in the number or type
23 of dogs, changes in the facility structure or safety, and changes in the health of the dog;

24 (3) To any entity licensed by the state pursuant to chapter 19 of title 4, or any veterinary
25 facility; or

26 (4) [Deleted by P.L. 2018, ch. 118, § 1 and P.L. 2018, ch. 198, § 1.]

27 (5) [Deleted by P.L. 2018, ch. 118, § 1 and P.L. 2018, ch. 198, § 1.]

28 (6) To an exhibitor holding a class C license under the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. §
29 2133) that are temporarily in the state, if authorized by the department of environmental
30 management (DEM).

31 (7) [Deleted by P.L. 2018, ch. 118, § 1 and P.L. 2018, ch. 198, § 1.]

32 (e) Any person in violation of this section shall be imprisoned not exceeding eleven (11)
33 months, or fined not less than ~~fifty dollars (\$50.00)~~ one hundred dollars (\$100) nor exceeding ~~five~~
34 ~~hundred dollars (\$500)~~ one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or both. Each day of violation shall constitute

1 a separate offense.

2 (f) General agents or special agents of the Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of
3 Cruelty to Animals (RISPCA) are hereby authorized to enforce the provisions of this chapter in
4 cooperation with animal control officers and the department of environmental management (DEM).

5 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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1 This act would increase the penalty for violations of the care of dogs statute to a minimum
2 fine of one hundred dollars (\$100) and a maximum fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per
3 violation.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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