

Senate Resolution 952

By: Senators Henson of the 41st, Butler of the 55th, Anderson of the 43rd, Williams of the 39th, Harrell of the 40th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Encouraging all animal control officers, animal protection field inspectors, law enforcement
2 officers, prosecutors, and judges to seek training from nonprofits in areas pertaining to
3 animal related cases, animal welfare, correlating human/animal linked crimes, disaster
4 planning for animals, and disease protocol and reporting; and for other purposes.

5 WHEREAS, the majority of Georgia's animal control officers, animal protection field
6 inspectors, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges have not received any training
7 in animal related cases, including animal cruelty or neglect, animal fighting, dangerous dogs,
8 or service animals; have not received any training in the animal cruelty statute under Title
9 16, the dogfighting statute under Title 16, the Responsible Dog Owner Act or the Animal
10 Protection Act under Title 4, other Title 4 statutes, the Rabies Law under Title 31, local
11 ordinances pertaining to animals, and rules and regulations protecting animals under the
12 Georgia Department of Agriculture; and have not received training on the well-established
13 link between crimes against humans and crimes against animals; and

14 WHEREAS, Georgia provides continuing education and certain accreditation requirements
15 for law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges but does not provide uniform
16 continuing education opportunities or an accreditation program for animal control officers
17 who are often first responders in these cases; and

18 WHEREAS, crimes against animals are unequivocally linked to other criminal activity. More
19 specifically, animal cruelty cases are precursors to larger crimes involving special victims
20 such as children, women, the elderly, and domestic violence victims. Certain animal crimes
21 are connected to human trafficking and gangs as well as illegal drugs, weapons, and
22 gambling on illegal events such as dogfighting and cockfighting; and

23 WHEREAS, as a result of a lack of training among those whose duty it is to protect the
24 public and to protect animals and related human victims, such activities are rampant in
25 Georgia; and

26 WHEREAS, in sentencing an animal abuser, judges may prohibit the defendant from owning
27 or possessing an animal until sentence is completed; and

28 WHEREAS, judges may execute protective orders in animal abuse cases that prohibit a
29 person from possessing or accessing an animal for a period of time; and

30 WHEREAS, conditions bonds may be used in animal abuse cases, animal fighting, and
31 dangerous dogs that prohibit a person from possessing or accessing an animal for a period
32 of time; and

33 WHEREAS, accessible training and support for Georgia's animal control officers, animal
34 protection field inspectors, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges on animal
35 related cases is essential for the safety of Georgia's communities; and

36 WHEREAS, Georgia-based Animal Law Source is a program under the Animal Protection
37 Society, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, whose purpose is to act as a statewide
38 resource with subject matter expertise in Georgia and federal law and best practices in animal
39 related cases, animal cruelty and neglect, animal fighting, animal hoarding, correlating
40 human/animal linked crimes, dangerous dogs, disaster planning for animals, disease protocol
41 and reporting, multianimal or costly impounds, service animals, abuse of law enforcement
42 animals, rabies protocols for the health and well-being of responding officers, and deterring
43 the spread of diseases; and

44 WHEREAS, the Animal Law Source program has developed a curriculum to satisfy the
45 animal cruelty investigation training requirement for Level II and III law enforcement
46 officers and animal control officers and provides specific training for prosecutors and judges;
47 and

48 WHEREAS, it is recommended that the overall lack of training for these professionals be
49 addressed so these professionals may respond to these cases accordingly, understand the
50 current laws, enforce the laws, and utilize best practices to ensure the safety of companion
51 animals and the safety of these professionals.

52 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that all animal control
53 officers, animal protection field inspectors, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges
54 are encouraged to seek training from nonprofits in areas related to animal abuse, including,
55 but not limited to, animal related cases, animal cruelty and neglect, animal fighting, animal

56 hoarding, correlating human/animal linked crimes, dangerous dogs, disaster planning for
57 animals, disease protocol and reporting, multianimal or costly impounds, service animals,
58 abuse of law enforcement animals, rabies protocols for the health and well-being of
59 responding officers, and deterring the spread of disease.

60 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
61 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the public and the
62 press.