

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE
ASSEMBLY, No. 2592
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: OCTOBER 18, 2023

SUMMARY

Synopsis: Waives pet adoption fees for certain military personnel and veterans.

Type of Impact: Annual revenue loss to counties and municipalities; potential annual revenue increase to counties and municipalities.

Agencies Affected: Counties and municipalities.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

| Fiscal Impact | <u>Annual</u> |
|--|------------------------|
| County and Municipal Revenue Loss | Approximately \$75,000 |
| Potential County and Municipal Revenue Increase | Up to \$75,000 |

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) determines that the elimination of pet adoption fees for eligible military personnel and veterans for pets adopted from county and municipal kennels, shelters, and pounds would result in an annual revenue loss to counties and municipalities of approximately \$75,000 per year, contingent on the number of pets adopted.
- The OLS notes that the revenue loss would be lower, or even eliminated, if these facilities increase their adoption fees for non-military individuals to compensate for the cost of providing free pets to eligible military personnel and veterans, which is permitted under the bill. In addition, the OLS notes that some kennels, shelters, and pounds already offer free pets to eligible military personnel and veterans, which reduces the overall fiscal impact of the bill.
- Furthermore, if the actual number of adoptions by eligible military personnel and veterans were lower than the figures used in this analysis, then the revenue loss would be less than \$75,000. Conversely, the revenue loss would be slightly higher if eligible military personnel and veterans adopt other animals, such as guinea pigs and rabbits, in addition to dogs and cats.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill would provide that the following persons would be entitled to adopt a pet without paying an adoption fee from a licensed kennel, shelter, or pound operated by a local government unit: (1) an active member of the New Jersey National Guard who has completed Initial Active Duty Training; (2) an active member of any branch or department of the Armed Forces of the United States, or reserve component thereof; and (3) a veteran.

The bill permits the owner or operator of a kennel, shelter, or pound to review and adjust the pet adoption fee to offset any cost increases associated with forgoing the pet adoption fee for eligible military personnel and veterans.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS determines that the elimination of pet adoption fees for eligible military personnel and veterans for pets adopted from county and municipal kennels, shelters, and pounds would result in an annual revenue loss to counties and municipalities of approximately \$75,000 per year, contingent on the number of pets adopted. The OLS determines that the revenue loss would be lower, or even eliminated, if these facilities increase their adoption fees for non-military individuals to compensate for the cost of providing free pets to eligible military personnel and veterans, which is permitted under the bill. In addition, the OLS notes that some of these facilities already offer free pets to eligible military personnel and veterans, which reduces the overall fiscal impact of the bill. Furthermore, if the actual number of adoptions by eligible military personnel and veterans were lower than the figures used in this analysis, then the revenue loss would be less than \$75,000. Conversely, the revenue loss would be slightly higher if eligible military personnel and veterans adopt other animals, such as guinea pigs and rabbits, in addition to dogs and cats. However, according to Department of Health data, animals adopted other than cats and dogs comprise less than five percent of adoptions.

There are currently 95 licensed kennels, shelters, and pounds in the State based on OLS research. Of those, there are 25 county and 33 municipal facilities. Additionally, based on data from the United States Department of Veteran Affairs and a United States Department of Defense report entitled "2021 Demographics Profile of the Military Community", active duty military and veterans comprise about five percent of the State adult population. Of the county and municipal facilities that reported adoption numbers in 2021, there were a total of 2,602 dogs and 7,746 cats adopted. Further, the lowest cost to adopt a dog is \$50, while the highest cost is \$600, with an average cost of approximately \$325. Of the 25 county and 33 municipal facilities, the lowest cost to adopt a cat is \$20, while the highest cost was \$150, with an average cost of approximately \$85. Based on these data and using certain assumptions, including that owners or operators of a kennel, shelter, or pound do not increase their adoption fees and that no other animals besides dogs or cats are adopted, the OLS estimates that the revenue loss across all county and municipal kennels, shelters, and pounds would be approximately \$75,000 per year. As noted above, if these facilities increase their fees to offset the cost of forgoing pet adoption fees for active duty military and

veterans, as is permitted under the bill, counties and municipalities would see a revenue increase that would reduce or eliminate the revenue loss attributable to this bill.

Section: Environment, Agriculture, Energy, and Natural Resources

*Analyst: Neha Patel
Senior Fiscal Analyst*

*Approved: Thomas Koenig
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer*

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).