



State of Tennessee

PUBLIC CHAPTER NO. 1106

SENATE BILL NO. 2013

By Bell, Pody, Crowe, Johnson, Niceley, Reeves

Substituted for: House Bill No. 1646

By Hall, Griffey, Russell, Lynn, Sherrell, Hardaway, Hawk, Campbell, Jerry Sexton, Doggett, Moon, Powell, Howell, Jernigan, Terry, Vital

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 37-1-134 and Title 39, Chapter 14, relative to criminal offenses against an animal.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. This act is known and may be cited as "Joker's Law."

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 39, Chapter 14, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) It is an offense to knowingly and unlawfully cause serious bodily injury to or kill a police dog, fire dog, search and rescue dog, service animal, or police horse without the owner's effective consent.

(b)(1) An offense under subsection (a) is a Class D felony.

(2) If conduct that is in violation of this section is also a violation of § 39-14-205 or any other criminal offense, the offense may be prosecuted under any of the applicable statutes.

(c) A person is justified in killing or injuring the animal of another if the person acted under a reasonable belief that the animal was creating an imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury to that person or another or an imminent danger of death to an animal owned by or in the control of that person. A person is not justified in killing or injuring the animal of another if, at the time of the killing, the person is trespassing upon the property of the owner of the animal. The justification for killing or injuring the animal of another authorized by this subsection (c) does not apply to a person who, while engaging in or attempting to escape from criminal conduct, kills or injures a police dog that is acting in its official capacity. In that case, subsection (a) applies to the person.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 39-14-205, is amended by deleting the section and substituting:

(a)(1) It is an offense to knowingly and unlawfully kill the animal of another without the owner's effective consent.

(2) A violation of subdivision (a)(1) is theft of property, graded according to the value of the animal, and punished in accordance with § 39-14-105.

(b) A person is justified in killing the animal of another if the person acted under a reasonable belief that the animal was creating an imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury to that person or another or an imminent danger of death to an animal owned by or in the control of that person. A person is not justified in killing the animal of another if, at the time of the killing, the person is trespassing upon the property of the owner of the animal.


SECTION 4. This act takes effect July 1, 2022, the public welfare requiring it.

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PASSED: April 27, 2022



RANDY McNALLY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE



CAMERON SEXTON, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED this 1st day of June 2022



BILL LEE, GOVERNOR