



**Substitute House Bill No. 6504**

**Public Act No. 21-90**

***AN ACT CONCERNING ANIMAL WELFARE.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Subdivision (10) of section 22-327 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(10) "Poultry" [means all domestic fowl and any pheasants or other game birds securely confined and lawfully owned and possessed by any person under the provisions of section 26-40] has the same meaning as provided in section 22-326s;

Sec. 2. Section 22-327 of the general statutes is amended by adding subdivision (13) as follows (*Effective from passage*):

(NEW) (13) "Service animal" has the same meaning as provided in 28 CFR 35.104 and includes any animal in training to become a service animal.

Sec. 3. Section 22-329 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

[The commissioner, the Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer, any municipal] Any animal control officer or regional

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animal control officer appointed pursuant to section 22-328, 22-331, as amended by this act, or 22-331a, as amended by this act, as applicable, or any law enforcement officer may interfere to prevent any act of cruelty upon any dog or other animal, and any person who interferes with or obstructs or resists [the commissioner or] any such officer in the discharge of such duty shall be guilty of a class D misdemeanor.

Sec. 4. Section 22-329a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) [The Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer or any municipal or regional animal control officer] Any animal control officer or regional animal control officer appointed pursuant to section 22-328, 22-331, as amended by this act, or 22-331a, as amended by this act, as applicable, may take physical custody of any animal when such animal control officer has reasonable cause to believe that such animal is in imminent harm and is neglected or is cruelly treated in violation of section 22-366, 22-415, 53-247, 53-248, 53-249, 53-249a, 53-250, 53-251 or 53-252, and, not later than ninety-six hours after taking physical custody, shall proceed as provided in subsection (c) of this section, except that if, in the opinion of a licensed veterinarian or the State Veterinarian, at any time after physical custody of such animal is taken, such animal is so injured or diseased that it should be [destroyed]  euthanized immediately, such officer may [humanely destroy or cause such animal to be humanely destroyed]  have such animal humanely euthanized by a licensed veterinarian.

(b) [The Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer or any municipal or regional animal control officer] Any animal control officer or regional animal control officer appointed pursuant to section 22-328, 22-331, as amended by this act, or 22-331a, as amended by this act, as applicable, may take physical custody of any animal upon issuance of a warrant finding probable cause that such animal is neglected or is cruelly treated in violation of section 22-366, 22-415, 53-

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247, 53-248, 53-249, 53-249a, 53-250, 53-251 or 53-252, and shall thereupon proceed as provided in subsection (c) of this section except that if, in the opinion of a licensed veterinarian or the State Veterinarian, at any time after physical custody of such animal is taken, such animal is so injured or diseased that it should be ~~[destroyed]~~  euthanized immediately, such officer may ~~[humanely destroy or cause such animal to be humanely destroyed]~~  have such animal humanely euthanized by a licensed veterinarian.

(c) Such officer shall file with the superior court which has venue over such matter or with the superior court for the judicial district of Hartford at Hartford a verified petition plainly stating such facts of neglect or cruel treatment as to bring such animal within the jurisdiction of the court and praying for appropriate action by the court in accordance with the provisions of this section. Upon the filing of such petition, the court shall cause a summons to be issued requiring the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the care of the animal, if known, to appear in court at the time and place named.

(d) If physical custody of an animal has been taken pursuant to subsection (a) or (b) of this section and it appears from the allegations of the petition filed pursuant to subsection (c) of this section and other affirmations of fact accompanying the petition, or provided subsequent thereto, that there is reasonable cause to find that the animal's condition or the circumstances surrounding its care require that temporary care and custody be immediately assumed to safeguard its welfare, the court shall either (1) issue an order to show cause why the court should not vest in some suitable state, municipal or other public or private agency or person the animal's temporary care and custody pending a hearing on the petition, or (2) issue an order vesting in some suitable state, municipal or other public or private agency or person the animal's temporary care and custody pending a hearing on the petition. A hearing on the order issued by the court pursuant to subdivision (1) or

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(2) of this subsection shall be held not later than fourteen days after the issuance of such order. The service of such order may be made by any officer authorized by law to serve process, state police officer or indifferent person and shall be served not less than forty-eight hours prior to the date and time of such hearing. If the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the care of the animal is not known, notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given by publication in a newspaper having a circulation in the town in which such officer took physical custody of such animal not less than forty-eight hours prior to the date and time of such hearing.

(e) If physical custody of an animal has not been taken pursuant to subsection (a) or (b) of this section, and [the Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer or any municipal or regional animal control] such officer has reasonable cause to believe that an animal is neglected or is cruelly treated in violation of section 22-366, 22-415, 53-247, 53-248, 53-249, 53-249a, 53-250, 53-251 or 53-252, such [animal control] officer may file a petition with the superior court which has venue over such matter or with the superior court for the judicial district of Hartford at Hartford, plainly stating such facts of neglect or cruel treatment as to bring the animal within the jurisdiction of the court and praying for appropriate action by the court to ensure the welfare of the animal including, but not limited to, physical removal and temporary care and custody of the animal, authorization of an animal control officer or regional animal control officer appointed pursuant to section 22-328, 22-331, as amended by this act, or 22-331a, as amended by this act, as applicable, or a licensed veterinarian to provide care for the animal on site, vesting of ownership of the animal, the posting of a bond in accordance with subsection (f) of this section and the assessment of costs in accordance with subsection (h) of this section. Upon the filing of such petition, the court shall cause a summons for an order to show cause to be issued requiring the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the care of the animal, if known, to appear in court at

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the time and place named. If the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the care of the animal is not known, notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given by publication in a newspaper having a circulation in the town where the animal is located not less than forty-eight hours prior to the date and time of the hearing. If it appears from the allegations of the petition filed pursuant to this subsection and other affirmations of fact accompanying the petition, or provided subsequent thereto, that there is reasonable cause to find that the animal's condition or the circumstances surrounding its care require the immediate removal of the animal from the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the care of the animal to safeguard its welfare, the court shall issue an order vesting in some suitable state, municipal or other public or private agency or person the animal's temporary care and custody pending a hearing on the petition which hearing shall be held not later than ten days after the issuance of such order for such temporary care and custody. The service of such order may be made by any officer authorized by law to serve process, state police officer or indifferent person and shall be served not less than forty-eight hours prior to the date and time of such hearing.

(f) If the court issues an order vesting the animal's temporary care and custody in some suitable state, municipal or other public or private agency or person, the owner or owners shall either relinquish ownership of the animal or post a surety bond or cash bond with the agency or person in whom the animal's temporary care and custody was vested. The surety bond or cash bond shall be in the amount of five hundred dollars for each animal placed in the temporary care or custody of such agency or person and shall secure payment for the reasonable expenses of the agency or person having temporary care and custody of the animal in caring and providing for such animal until the court makes a finding as to the animal's disposition under subsection (g) of this section. The requirement that a bond be posted may be waived if such owner provides satisfactory evidence that such owner is indigent and

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unable to pay for such bond.

(g) (1) If, after hearing, the court finds that the animal is neglected or cruelly treated, it shall vest ownership of the animal in any state, municipal or other public or private agency which is permitted by law to care for neglected or cruelly treated animals or with any person found to be suitable or worthy of such responsibility by the court.

(2) If, after hearing, the court finds that the animal is so injured or diseased that it should be [~~destroyed~~] humanely euthanized, the court may order that such animal be humanely [~~destroyed~~] euthanized by a licensed veterinarian.

(3) If, after hearing, the court finds that the animal is not neglected or cruelly treated, it may cause the animal to be returned to its owner or owners or person having responsibility for its care or, if such owner or owners or person is unknown or unwilling to resume caring for such animal, it may vest ownership of the animal in any state, municipal or other public or private agency or person found to be suitable or worthy of such responsibility.

(4) If the court makes a finding under subdivision (1) or (2) of this subsection less than thirty days after the issuance of an order of temporary care and custody and the owner of the animal has posted a bond, the agency or person with whom the bond was posted shall return the balance of such bond, if any, to the owner. The amount of the bond to be returned to the owner shall be calculated at the rate of fifteen dollars per day per animal or twenty-five dollars per day per animal if the animal is a horse or other large livestock for the number of days less than thirty that such agency or person has not had temporary care and custody of the animal less any veterinary costs and expenses incurred for the welfare of the animal.

(5) If the court makes a finding under subdivision (3) of this

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subsection after the issuance of an order of temporary care and custody and the owner of the animal has posted a bond, the agency or person with whom the bond was posted shall return such bond to such owner.

(h) If the court finds that the animal is neglected or cruelly treated, the expenses incurred by the state or a municipality in providing proper food, shelter and care to an animal it has taken custody of under subsection (a) or (b) of this section and the expenses incurred by any state, municipal or other public or private agency or person in providing temporary care and custody pursuant to an order vesting temporary care and custody, calculated at the rate of fifteen dollars per day per animal or twenty-five dollars per day per animal if the animal is a horse or other large livestock until the date ownership is vested pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (g) of this section shall be paid by the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the care of the animal. In addition, all veterinary costs and expenses incurred for the welfare of the animal that are not covered by the per diem rate shall be paid by the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the animal.

(i) If the court vests ownership of the animal in the Commissioner of Agriculture or a municipality, the commissioner or the municipality may conduct or participate in a public auction of the animal under such conditions the commissioner or the municipality deems necessary or the commissioner or the municipality may consign the animal to an auction or sell the animal through an open advertised bid process whereby bid price and demonstration of sufficient knowledge and ability to care for such animal are factors for the commissioner's or municipality's consideration. All moneys collected from the sale of animals sold by the Commissioner of Agriculture through such open advertised bid process shall be deposited in the animal abuse cost recovery account established in subsection (j) of this section. All moneys collected from the sale of animals sold by a municipality through such open advertised bid

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process shall be deposited by the town treasurer or other fiscal officer in the town's general fund. The commissioner or the municipality may also vest ownership of any such animal in an individual or a public or private nonprofit animal rescue or adoption organization.

(j) There is established a separate, nonlapsing account within the General Fund, to be known as the "animal abuse cost recovery account". All moneys collected from sales at public auction of animals seized by the Department of Agriculture pursuant to this section shall be deposited into the account. Deposits of moneys may be made into the account from public or private sources, including, but not limited to, the federal government or municipal governments.

(k) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes, any moneys received by the Department of Agriculture pursuant to subsection (j) of this section shall be deposited in the General Fund and credited to the animal abuse cost recovery account. The account shall be available to the Commissioner of Agriculture for the purpose of the housing, care and welfare of any animal seized by the department, until final disposition of such animal. Additionally, the account may be used for the purpose of providing reimbursement to any municipality for the costs of providing temporary care to such animal if such temporary care exceeded thirty days in duration and such costs exceeded the amount of any surety bond or cash bond posted pursuant to subsection (f) of this section provided the total annual reimbursement to municipalities from said account for such purpose shall not exceed twenty-five thousand dollars. Nothing in this section shall prevent the commissioner from obtaining or using funds from sources other than the account for the housing, care and welfare of any animal seized by the department pursuant to this section.

Sec. 5. Section 22-331 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):



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(a) In each municipality of the state having a population of more than twenty-five thousand which has adopted the provisions of chapter 113, or otherwise provided for a merit system for its employees, the chief of police, or such other appointing authority as the charter may designate, shall, appoint a full-time municipal animal control officer and such assistants as are deemed necessary, subject to the provisions of said chapter 113 or other merit system, to administer and enforce the laws relating to dogs or other domestic animals. Any person so appointed may be or become a member of the police department and for such purpose the legislative body of such municipality may waive any requirements as to age, sex, physical condition, education and training applicable to other members of the police department. Any person so appointed as a member of the police department shall be fully eligible to participate in the retirement system of such department.

(b) Except as provided in section 22-331a, as amended by this act, the chief or superintendent of police in each other city or town having a police department and the selectmen or chief executive officer in each town which has no police department, or such other appointing authority as the charter of such town may designate, in their respective jurisdictions, shall appoint a municipal animal control officer and such assistants as are deemed necessary to administer and enforce the laws relating to dogs and other domestic animals. Such officer and assistants shall have such qualifications as the commissioner may prescribe and shall serve for a term of at least one year.

(c) Each appointment made under the provisions of this section shall be reported promptly to the commissioner. Each person appointed under the provisions of subsection (a) of this section shall, and any person appointed under the provisions of subsection (b) of this section may, be paid a salary and expenses in lieu of the fees provided in section 22-334 and the amount thereof shall be transferred from the dog fund account to the appropriation of the proper department.

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(d) The municipal animal control officer so appointed in any [city] municipality the limits of which are not coterminous with those of the [town] municipality in which it is located shall have authority as such municipal animal control officer throughout such town, and the town treasurer or other fiscal officer shall annually reimburse the [city] municipality, from the dog fund account, for the salaries and expenses of such officer or his or her assistants. The municipal animal control officer so appointed in any town having a borough within its limits shall have authority as such municipal animal control officer throughout the limits of such town. If, in any [city or town] municipality, the officer or officers charged with such duty fail to report such appointment, the commissioner shall notify such officer or officers to make and report such appointment within ten days of receipt of such notification, and, if such appointment is not made within such time, the commissioner shall appoint a municipal animal control officer for such [city or town] municipality.

(e) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes or any special act, municipal charter or ordinance, any chief elected official of any municipality or a regional animal control facility may appoint, on a temporary basis not to exceed ninety days, any animal control officer or regional animal control officer appointed pursuant to this section or section 22-331a, as amended by this act, as applicable, to act as an animal control officer in such municipality or region. Any animal control officer or regional animal control officer who provides services pursuant to an appointment made in accordance with this subsection shall have all the powers and authority granted to such animal control officer in the municipality or region in which such officer is appointed. Any such appointment made pursuant to this subsection shall be made in writing and be approved by each of the chief elected officials of the municipalities affected by such appointment and by each regional animal control facility that is affected by such appointment. Such written appointment shall include, at a minimum, information

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concerning the compensation to be paid to such officer, insurance provided to such officer and the use of equipment, if any, for such officer. The Commissioner of Agriculture shall be notified, in writing, of any such appointment made pursuant to this subsection not later than five days following such appointment.

Sec. 6. Section 22-331a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

Any two or more towns each of which has a population of less than fifty thousand, and which have or will provide a dog pound facility within their region, by action of their [legislative bodies] board of selectmen, town council or other governing body, may agree to be served by a regional animal control officer. Upon certification of such agreement to the commissioner with assurances from the towns so certifying that they will provide and continue to provide adequate facilities and compensation for such officer, the commissioner may, after giving due regard to the regional aspects of the proposed facilities and whether the proposed region would be in the best interests of the towns so certifying, establish such region. Each person so appointed shall have the same powers and duties within the region to which he is assigned as a municipal animal control officer in each town therein. All costs of maintaining and operating such pounds and administering and enforcing the laws relating to dogs within such regions shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of the agreement certified to the commissioner under this section. Any pound facility operated pursuant to this section shall meet the construction, maintenance and sanitation standards established pursuant to section 22-336 and any regulations adopted pursuant to said section, including, but not limited to, standards for the handling and transportation of dogs and other domestic animals.

Sec. 7. Section 22-332 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

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(a) [The Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer or any municipal animal control officer] Any animal control officer or regional animal control officer appointed pursuant to section 22-328, 22-331, as amended by this act, or 22-331a, as amended by this act, as applicable, shall be responsible for the enforcement of this chapter and shall make diligent search and inquiry for any violation of any of its provisions. Any such officer may take into custody (1) any dog found roaming in violation of the provisions of section 22-364, (2) any dog not having a tag or plate on a collar about its neck or on a harness on its body as provided by law or which is not confined or controlled in accordance with the provisions of any order or regulation relating to rabies issued by the commissioner in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, or (3) any dog or other domestic animal found injured on any highway, neglected, abandoned or cruelly treated. The officer shall impound such dog or other domestic animal at the pound serving the town where the dog or other domestic animal is taken unless, in the opinion of a licensed veterinarian, the dog or other domestic animal is so injured or diseased that it should be [destroyed] euthanized immediately, in which case the municipal animal control officer of such town may [cause the dog or other domestic animal to be mercifully killed] have such dog or other animal humanely euthanized by a licensed veterinarian or disposed of as the State Veterinarian may direct. The [municipal animal control] officer shall immediately notify the owner or keeper of any dog or other [domestic] animal so taken, if known, of its impoundment. [Such officer shall immediately notify the owner or keeper of any other domestic animal which is taken into custody, if such owner or keeper is known.] If the owner or keeper of any such dog or other domestic animal is unknown, the officer shall immediately tag or employ [such] other suitable means of official identification of the dog or other domestic animal [as may be approved by the Chief Animal Control Officer] and shall promptly cause (A) a description of such dog or other domestic animal to be published once in the lost and found column of a newspaper having a circulation in such

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town or that has a state-wide circulation, and (B) a photograph or description of such dog or other domestic animal and the date on which such dog or other domestic animal is no longer legally required to be impounded to be posted on a national pet adoption Internet web site or an Internet web site that is maintained or accessed by the animal control officer and that is accessible to the public through an Internet search, except such posting shall not be required if: (i) The dog or other domestic animal is held pending the resolution of civil or criminal litigation involving such dog or other domestic animal, (ii) the officer has a good faith belief that the dog or other domestic animal would be adopted by or transferred to a public or private nonprofit rescue organization for the purpose of placing such dog or other domestic animal in an adoptive home even in the absence of such posting, (iii) the dog or other domestic animal's safety will be placed at risk, or (iv) such animal control officer determines that such dog or other domestic animal is feral and not adoptable. If any animal control officer does not have the technological resources to post such information on an Internet web site as required by subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, such officer may contact a public or private animal rescue organization and request that such organization post such information, at such organization's expense, on an Internet web site that is accessible to the public through an Internet search. To the extent practicable, any such posting by an animal control officer or a public or private animal rescue organization shall remain posted for the duration of such dog's or other domestic animal's impoundment in the municipal or regional dog pound.

(b) If such dog or other domestic animal is not claimed by and released to the owner within seven days after the date of publication, [the municipal animal control] such officer, upon finding such dog or other domestic animal to be in satisfactory health, may have a licensed veterinarian spay or neuter such dog and sell such dog or other domestic animal to any person who satisfies such officer that such

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person is purchasing such dog or other domestic animal as a pet and that such person can give it a good home and proper care. [The municipal animal control] Such officer may retain possession of such dog or other domestic animal for such additional period of time as such [animal control] officer may deem advisable in order to place such dog or other domestic animal as a pet and may have a licensed veterinarian spay or neuter such dog. If, within such period, any dog or other domestic animal is not claimed by and released to the owner or keeper or purchased as a pet, the officer shall cause such dog or other domestic animal to be [mercifully killed] humanely euthanized by a licensed veterinarian or disposed of as the State Veterinarian may direct. Any veterinarian who so [destroys] euthanizes a dog shall be paid from the dog fund account. No person who [so destroys] euthanizes a dog or other domestic animal shall be held criminally or civilly liable therefor nor shall any licensed veterinarian who spays or neuters a dog pursuant to this section be held civilly liable. [, including, but not limited to, liability for reconstructive neautical implantation surgery.]

(c) The town treasurer or other fiscal officer shall pay from the dog fund account the advertising expense incurred under the provisions of this section upon receipt of an itemized statement together with a copy of the advertisement as published. Any person who purchases a dog as a pet shall pay a fee of five dollars and procure a license and tag for such dog from the town clerk, in accordance with the provisions of section 22-338. In addition to the five-dollar fee, any person who purchases a dog as a pet may be charged the cost the municipality incurred, if any, to spay or neuter and vaccinate the dog, provided such charge shall not exceed one hundred fifty dollars.

(d) No regional or municipal dog pound facility, municipality, [regional or municipal animal control officer] animal control officer or regional animal control officer appointed pursuant to section 22-328, 22-331, as amended by this act, or 22-331a, as amended by this act, as

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applicable, or public or private nonprofit animal rescue organization that arranges for the provision of treatment by a licensed veterinarian to an injured, sick or diseased animal pursuant to a contract described in section 22-332e shall be held civilly liable for such actions unless such actions are performed in a wanton, reckless or malicious manner. No licensed veterinarian who provides treatment free of charge or for a reduced fee, to an injured, sick or diseased animal as a direct result of a contract described in section 22-332e shall be held civilly liable for the provision of such treatment unless such actions are performed in a wilful, wanton or reckless manner.

Sec. 8. Section 22-344f of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) Any animal importer and any person who operates or maintains an animal shelter, as defined in section 22-344, shall, not later than forty-eight hours after importing any dog or cat into this state and prior to the sale, adoption or transfer of such dog or cat to any person, provide for the examination of such dog or cat by a veterinarian licensed under chapter 384. Thereafter, such animal importer or person who operates or maintains an animal shelter shall provide for the examination of such dog or cat by a veterinarian licensed under chapter 384 every ninety days until such dog or cat is sold, adopted or transferred, provided no such dog or cat shall be sold, adopted or transferred to another person by an animal importer or person who operates or maintains an animal shelter unless (1) such dog or cat was examined by a veterinarian licensed under chapter 384 not more than fifteen days prior to the sale, adoption or transfer of such dog or cat, and (2) such veterinarian provides such animal importer or person who operates or maintains an animal shelter with a written certificate stating that such dog or cat is free of any symptoms of any illness, infectious, contagious or communicable disease. Such certificate shall list the name, address and contact information of such animal importer or person who operates or

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maintains an animal shelter. Any animal importer or person who operates or maintains an animal shelter who violates the provisions of this subsection shall be fined [not more than five hundred dollars for each animal that is the subject of such violation] for a first violation, two hundred fifty dollars for each animal that is the subject of such violation, and for any subsequent violation, five hundred dollars for each animal that is the subject of such violation.

(b) Each animal importer and each person who operates or maintains an animal shelter shall maintain a record of the veterinary services rendered to each dog or cat imported into this state by such animal importer or person. Such record shall be maintained by such animal importer or person for a period of three years. Any animal importer or such person who violates the provisions of this subsection shall be fined [five hundred dollars] two hundred fifty dollars for a first violation and five hundred dollars for any subsequent violation.

Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Notwithstanding any provision of chapter 435 of the general statutes, the Commissioner of Agriculture shall develop a waiver request process and form for the owner, keeper or veterinarian for any animal that was attacked and that may have been exposed to rabies as a result of such attack to request a reduction of the requisite quarantine period for such animal from six months to four months if such owner, keeper or veterinarian submits proof with such waiver request that such animal was vaccinated for rabies not more than ninety-six hours after such attack. Such waiver request process and form shall be: (1) Posted on the Internet web site of the Department of Agriculture, (2) made publicly available and accessible, and (3) made known to veterinarians throughout the state by said department.

Sec. 10. Subsection (b) of section 22-380g of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 31, 2021*):



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(b) Not more than [ten] twenty per cent of the funds deposited in the animal population control account in accordance with subsection (f) of section 14-21h, subsection (a) of section 22-338, section 22-380f and section 22-380l shall be used for the sterilization and vaccination of feral cats program in accordance with subdivision (4) of subsection (a) of this section.

Sec. 11. Subsection (a) of section 22-380i of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 31, 2021*):

(a) The program established under section 22-380g, as amended by this act, shall provide for payment to any participating veterinarian of an amount equivalent to the voucher issued pursuant to section 22-380f for each animal sterilization and vaccinations, coincident with sterilization, performed by such veterinarian upon a dog or cat owned by an eligible owner. For a sterilization procedure, [such voucher shall be in the amount of one hundred twenty dollars for a female dog, one hundred dollars for a male dog, seventy dollars for a female cat and fifty dollars for a male cat] the Commissioner of Agriculture shall establish a rate of reimbursement that is not more than seventy-five per cent of the market rate or the fee charged by veterinarians in the state as of October 31, 2021. In the case of a sterilization fee exceeding the amount of the voucher, the eligible owner shall pay the participating veterinarian the difference between such fee and the amount of the voucher. Such voucher shall be in the amount of [twenty] thirty dollars, in addition to the amount designated for sterilization, for vaccinations coincident with the sterilization of a dog or cat owned by an eligible owner.

Sec. 12. Section 20-197 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

(a) No person shall practice veterinary medicine, surgery or dentistry until [he] such person has obtained a license as provided in section 20-

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199. A person shall be construed to practice veterinary medicine, surgery or dentistry, within the meaning of this chapter, who holds himself or herself out as being able to diagnose, administer biologics for, treat, operate or prescribe for any animal or bird disease, pain, injury, deformity or physical condition, or who either offers or undertakes, by any means or methods, to diagnose, administer biologics for, treat, operate or prescribe for any animal or bird disease, pain, injury, deformity or physical condition. The euthanizing of animals in accordance with applicable state and federal drug laws by the Connecticut Humane Society, the floating of teeth in horses by persons experienced in that practice and the performance of myofascial trigger point therapy by persons experienced in that practice shall not be deemed to be the practice of veterinary medicine. For the purposes of this section, "floating teeth" means using hand-held rasps to reduce or eliminate sharp or uneven edges on a horse's upper and lower molars to avoid injury to the tongue and cheeks and to improve chewing food, but does not include treating decay or tumors or extracting teeth. For the purposes of this section, "myofascial trigger point therapy" means the use of specific palpation, compression, stretching and corrective exercise for promoting optimum athleticism, and "persons experienced in that practice" means persons who, prior to October 1, 2003, have attended a minimum of two hundred hours of classroom, lecture and hands-on practice in myofascial trigger point therapy, including animal musculoskeletal anatomy and biomechanics, theory and application of animal myofascial trigger point techniques, factors that habituate a presenting condition and corrective exercise.

(b) No veterinarian licensed under this chapter may practice veterinary medicine on an animal without first establishing a veterinarian-client-patient relationship with the animal and the owner of the animal or person responsible for the care of the animal, except that a veterinarian licensed under this chapter may provide, in good faith, emergency or urgent care to an animal when no veterinarian-

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client-patient relationship has been established if the owner of the animal or person responsible for the care of such animal cannot be identified. A veterinarian shall be deemed to have established a veterinarian-client-patient relationship if the following conditions have been met:

(1) The veterinarian has assumed the responsibility of making medical judgments regarding the health of the animal and the need for the provision of medical care or treatment to the animal and has instructed the owner of the animal or person responsible for the care of the animal on the appropriate course of medical care or treatment of the animal;

(2) The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal to make at least a preliminary or general diagnosis of the animal;

(3) The owner of the animal or person responsible for the care of the animal has agreed to follow the veterinarian's recommendations regarding medical care or treatment of the animal;

(4) The veterinarian is available for a follow-up evaluation of the animal or has arranged for (A) emergency or urgent care coverage for the animal, or (B) continuing medical care or treatment of the animal, as designated by the veterinarian, by another licensed veterinarian who (i) has access to the animal's medical records, or (ii) can provide reasonable and appropriate medical care or treatment to the animal;

(5) The veterinarian oversees the medical care or treatment of the animal; and

(6) The veterinarian (A) has performed a physical examination of the animal, or (B) is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal by virtue of providing timely and appropriate medical care or treatment to another animal at the same location where the animal is kept.

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(c) A veterinarian-client-patient relationship may not be established solely through veterinary telemedicine. After a veterinarian-client-patient relationship has been established, such relationship may be maintained through veterinary telemedicine in between medically necessary examinations of the animal by the veterinarian or timely medical visits by the veterinarian to the location where the animal is kept. If there is no veterinarian-client-patient relationship, a veterinarian may only provide general advice using electronic means and shall not provide any specific advice regarding the animal, including, but not limited to, any diagnosis or recommended medical care or treatment of the animal. As used in this subsection, "veterinary telemedicine" means the exchange of medical information regarding the status of an animal's health or the delivery of a medical diagnosis, care or treatment of an animal through electronic means, including, but not limited to, telephone, video, mobile applications or an Internet web site-based platform.