

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1781
By: Menéndez
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Every year thousands of companion animals are euthanized in Texas. According to the Texas Humane Legislation Network, an estimated 700,000 animals are euthanized each year in animal control facilities in Texas.

S.B. 1781 aims to maximize shelter space by requiring a county or municipal animal shelter located in counties with a population of 500,000 or more to use all available kennel space where they can safely house a companion animal instead of euthanizing.

A shelter can euthanize an animal under any of the following conditions: (1) an animal suspected of carrying rabies as determined by a veterinarian, (2) a dog that has injured a person, (3) an animal who has a poor or grave prognosis for being able to live without severe, unremitting pain even with comprehensive, prompt, and necessary veterinary care, as determined by a licensed veterinarian, and (4) if there no is space to safely shelter an animal.

This policy only affects shelters, not private citizens.

As proposed, S.B. 1781 amends current law relating to euthanasia as a last resort in a county or municipal animal shelter in certain counties.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 821, Health and Safety Code, by adding Section 821.0521, as follows:

Sec. 821.0521. EUTHANASIA AS LAST RESORT. (a) Provides that this section applies only to a county or municipal animal shelter in a county having a population of more than 500,000.

(b) Prohibits a dog, cat, or other companion animal impounded in an animal shelter from being euthanized if there is an empty cage, kennel, or other living environment in the shelter in which to safely place the animal or if the animal can safely share a cage, kennel, or other living environment in the shelter with another animal of the same species.

(c) Provides that this section does not apply to:

(1) an animal suspected of carrying and exhibiting signs of rabies, as determined by a licensed veterinarian;

(2) a dog that, after severely injuring a person, has been determined by a court having competent jurisdiction to be a dangerous dog under state law;
or

(3) an animal who has a poor or grave prognosis for being able to live without severe, unremitting pain even with comprehensive, prompt, and necessary veterinary care, as determined by a licensed veterinarian.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2015.