

By: Davis of Harris

H.B. No. 940

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

2 relating to the unlawful restraint of a dog; creating a criminal
3 offense.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. Chapter 821, Health and Safety Code, is amended
6 by adding Subchapter E to read as follows:

7 SUBCHAPTER E. UNLAWFUL RESTRAINT OF DOG

8 Sec. 821.101. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

9 (1) "Adequate shelter" means a clean and sturdy
10 structure:

11 (A) that allows the dog protection from rain,
12 hail, sleet, snow, and subfreezing temperatures; and

13 (B) with dimensions that allow the dog while in
14 the shelter to stand erect, sit, turn around, and lie down in a
15 normal position.

16 (2) "Collar" means a band constructed of nylon,
17 leather, or similar material, specifically designed to be placed
18 around the neck of a dog.

19 (3) "Harness" means a set of straps constructed of
20 nylon, leather, or similar material, specifically designed to
21 restrain or control a dog.

22 (4) "Owner" means a person who owns or has custody or
23 control of a dog.

24 (5) "Properly fitted" means, with respect to a collar

1 or harness, a collar or harness that:

2 (A) is appropriately sized for the dog based on
3 the dog's measurements and body weight;

4 (B) does not choke the dog or impede the dog's
5 normal breathing or swallowing; and

6 (C) is attached around the dog in a manner that
7 does not allow for escape and does not cause pain or injury to the
8 dog.

9 (6) "Restraint" means a chain, rope, tether, leash,
10 cable, or other device that attaches a dog to a stationary object or
11 trolley system.

12 Sec. 821.102. UNLAWFUL RESTRAINT OF DOG. (a) An owner may
13 not leave a dog outside and unattended by use of a restraint unless
14 the owner provides the dog access to:

15 (1) adequate shelter;

16 (2) an area that allows the dog to avoid standing
17 water;

18 (3) shade from direct sunlight; and

19 (4) potable water.

20 (b) An owner may not restrain a dog outside and unattended
21 by use of a restraint that:

22 (1) is a chain;

23 (2) has weights attached;

24 (3) is shorter in length than the greater of:

25 (A) five times the length of the dog, as measured
26 from the tip of the dog's nose to the base of the dog's tail; or

27 (B) 10 feet;

1 (4) is not attached to a properly fitted collar or
2 harness; or

3 (5) causes pain or injury to the dog.

4 Sec. 821.103. EXCEPTIONS. (a) Section 821.102 does not
5 apply to:

6 (1) the use of a restraint on a dog in a public camping
7 or recreational area in compliance with the requirements of the
8 public camping or recreational area as defined by a federal, state,
9 or local authority or jurisdiction;

10 (2) the use of a restraint on a dog while the owner and
11 dog engage in, or actively train for, an activity conducted under a
12 valid license issued by this state provided the activity is
13 associated with the use or presence of a dog;

14 (3) the use of a restraint on a dog while the owner and
15 dog engage in conduct directly related to the business of
16 shepherding or herding cattle or livestock;

17 (4) the use of a restraint on a dog while the owner and
18 dog engage in conduct directly related to the business of
19 cultivating agricultural products; or

20 (5) the leaving of a dog unattended in an open-air
21 truck bed only for the time necessary for the owner to complete a
22 temporary task that requires the dog to be left unattended in the
23 truck bed.

24 (b) Section 821.102(b)(3) does not apply to a restraint
25 attached to a trolley system that allows a dog to move along a
26 running line for a distance equal to or greater than the lengths
27 specified under that subdivision.

1 (c) This subchapter does not prohibit a person from walking
2 a dog with a handheld leash.

3 Sec. 821.104. OFFENSE; PENALTY. (a) A person commits an
4 offense if the person knowingly violates this subchapter. The
5 restraint of each dog that is in violation is a separate offense.

6 (b) An offense under this subchapter is a Class C
7 misdemeanor, except that the offense is a Class B misdemeanor if the
8 person has previously been convicted under this subchapter.

9 (c) If conduct constituting an offense under this
10 subchapter also constitutes an offense under any other law, the
11 actor may be prosecuted under this section, the other law, or both.

12 Sec. 821.105. EFFECT OF SUBCHAPTER ON OTHER LAW. This
13 subchapter does not preempt a local regulation relating to the
14 restraint of a dog or affect the authority of a political
15 subdivision to adopt or enforce an ordinance or requirement
16 relating to the restraint of a dog if the regulation, ordinance, or
17 requirement:

18 (1) is compatible with and equal to or more stringent
19 than a requirement prescribed by this subchapter; or

20 (2) relates to an issue not specifically addressed by
21 this subchapter.

22 SECTION 2. Subchapter D, Chapter 821, Health and Safety
23 Code, is repealed.

24 SECTION 3. The change in law made by this Act applies only
25 to an offense committed on or after the effective date of this Act.
26 An offense committed before the effective date of this Act is
27 governed by the law in effect on the date the offense was committed,

1 and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose. For
2 purposes of this section, an offense was committed before the
3 effective date of this Act if any element of the offense occurred
4 before that date.

5 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.