

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1179  
By: Ramos  
Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Pets are important to people and they often become part of the family. Legally, though, they are not considered family members. Instead, they are technically considered property and are often overlooked in protection orders. However, pets can be highly relevant to the protection of a victim of family violence as abusers may threaten pets or livestock to control their victims and make them stay. According to a 2012 survey conducted by the Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges, it was found that for approximately 55% of the survey participants, animal abuse was part of their experience of family violence. In the survey, approximately 28% of participants said that they would have left their abusive partner much earlier if they did not have a pet or animal. The length of time the women had stayed in a relationship ranged from one week up to twenty-two years, with a median length of two years. Additionally, insufficient public information about the options available to a victim of family violence concerning their pet when seeking a protective order may be an exacerbating factor in prolonging a situation that involves family violence. H.B. 1179 seeks to address this issue by requiring information on protective order provisions for pets and companion animals to be developed and provided to the public.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1179 amends the Family Code to require the Office of the Attorney General and the State Bar of Texas to jointly develop information to provide to the public about the provisions that may be included in a protective order in cases of family violence, including the ability of a court to render a protective order prohibiting a party from removing a pet, companion animal, or assistance animal from the possession or actual or constructive care of a person named in the order.

H.B. 1179 amends the Government Code to require the office of a prosecuting attorney to make such information readily available at the prosecuting attorney's office to persons who wish to apply for a protective order.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.