

By the Committee on Agriculture; and Senator Atwater

575-05405-08

20081994c1

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to the Gertrude Maxwell Save a Pet Act;
3 providing a short title; creating s. 570.97, F.S.;
4 creating a direct-support organization for the Department
5 of Agriculture and Consumer Services; providing for the
6 organization and operation of the direct-support
7 organization; providing for the purpose of the direct-
8 support organization; providing that the direct-support
9 organization be governed by a board of directors;
10 providing for membership and terms; providing for the
11 appointment of honorary board members; providing an
12 effective date.

13
14 WHEREAS, it is estimated that over 800,000 homeless,
15 discarded, abandoned, stray, and unclaimed dogs and cats are
16 euthanized in the state each year, and

17 WHEREAS, in 7 years one female cat and her offspring can
18 theoretically produce 420,000 cats, and in 6 years one female dog
19 and her offspring can theoretically produce 67,000 dogs, and

20 WHEREAS, the cost to spay or neuter pet and feral cats is
21 about \$20-\$70 per cat, while the approximate cost to capture,
22 house, feed, and eventually euthanize a homeless animal is about
23 \$100, and

24 WHEREAS, reducing euthanasia of unwanted animals can save
25 lives of companion animals and potential service animals and save
26 tax dollars and many homeless animals can be trained as service
27 animals and therapy animals, NOW, THEREFORE,

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29 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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31 Section 1. This act may be cited as the "Gertrude Maxwell
32 Save a Pet Act."

33 Section 2. Section 570.97, Florida Statutes, is created to
34 read:

35 570.97 Gertrude Maxwell Save a Pet Direct-Support
36 Organization.--

37 (1) The Gertrude Maxwell Save a Pet Direct-Support
38 Organization is created within the Department of Agriculture and
39 Consumer Services. The direct-support organization is governed by
40 this section and ss. 570.902 and 570.903.

41 (2) The purpose of the direct-support organization is to
42 provide grants to animal shelters for spaying and neutering, for
43 shelters and services during times of emergencies, and to develop
44 and disseminate educational materials concerning the care of
45 pets. The direct-support organization may not participate in,
46 endorse, or financially support political activities at the
47 national, state, or local level.

48 (3) The direct-support organization shall be governed by a
49 board of directors made up of eight members. The board of
50 directors of the direct-support organization shall include the
51 Commissioner of Agriculture, or his or her designee, who shall
52 choose one member from each of the following organizations who
53 shall be appointed to a term of 4 years:

54 (a) The Florida Veterinary Medical Association;

55 (b) The Cat Fancier Association;

56 (c) The Florida Association of Kennel Clubs;

57 (d) A humane society organization;

58 (e) The Florida Animal Control Association;

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59 (f) The National Rifle Association; and

60 (g) One citizen member not otherwise associated with any of
61 the named organizations.

62 (4) The Commissioner of Agriculture may appoint up to three
63 nonvoting honorary members. Nominees must be individuals,
64 companies, or organizations that have demonstrated commitment to,
65 or made significant contributions to, the health, safety, or
66 well-being of animals. Gertrude Maxwell, or her designee, shall
67 be appointed as the first honorary member of the direct-support
68 organization. Honorary board members shall be appointed to a 1-
69 year term and may be appointed to a maximum of two consecutive
70 terms.

71 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.