

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 for the membership of the
 9 board of directors; providing for honorary board members
 10 of the direct-support organization; providing for
 11 appointment of Gertrude Maxwell or her designee as the
 12 first honorary board member of the direct-support
 13 organization; providing an effective date.

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

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

21 WHEREAS, the cost to spay or neuter a pet or feral cat is
 22 about \$20-\$70 per animal, while the approximate cost to capture,
 23 house, feed, and eventually euthanize a homeless animal is about
 24 \$100, and

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

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

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

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

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

(1) The Gertrude Maxwell Save a Pet Direct-Support Organization is created within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and shall be governed by this section and ss. 570.902 and 570.903. The purpose of this direct-support organization is to provide grants to animal shelters for spaying and neutering animals, provide grants for shelters and services during times of emergencies, and develop and disseminate pet care education materials. The direct-support organization shall not participate in, endorse, or financially support political activities at the national, state, or local level.

(2) The board of directors of the direct-support organization shall include one representative of each of the following groups as recommended by that group: the Florida Veterinary Medical Association, the Cat Fanciers' Association, the Florida Association of Kennel Clubs, a humane organization designated by the commissioner, the Florida Animal Control Association, the National Rifle Association, a consumer member not affiliated with any of the aforementioned associations, and the commissioner or his or her designee.

57 (3) The board of directors of the direct-support
58 organization may appoint up to three nonvoting honorary members.
59 Nominees should be individuals, companies, or organizations that
60 have exemplified themselves or have made significant
61 contributions to the health, safety, or well-being of animals.
62 Honorary board members shall serve for a maximum of two
63 consecutive annual terms. The commissioner shall appoint the
64 board of directors as well as the honorary board members.

65 Section 3. Gertrude Maxwell or her designee shall be
66 appointed as the first honorary member of the board of directors
67 of the direct-support organization created by this act.

68 Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.