

# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL ANALYSIS

*This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.*

**BILL #:** [CS/HB 593](#)

**TITLE:** Dangerous Dogs

**SPONSOR(S):** Sapp

**COMPANION BILL:** [SB 572](#) (Collins)

**LINKED BILLS:** None

**RELATED BILLS:** None

## Committee References

[Intergovernmental Affairs](#)

16 Y, 0 N, As CS

[Civil Justice & Claims](#)

[Agriculture & Natural  
Resources Budget](#)

[State Affairs](#)

## SUMMARY

### Effect of the Bill:

The bill creates the “Pam Rock Act,” revising provisions relating to dangerous dogs by requiring:

- A dog owner who has knowledge of a dog’s dangerous propensities to securely confine the dog in a proper enclosure as if the dog had been determined to be dangerous;
- Animal control authorities to hold dogs during the course of a dangerous dog investigation in certain instances;
- Dogs that have been declared dangerous to be microchipped and spayed or neutered;
- The owner of a dangerous dog to obtain at least \$100,000 of liability insurance;
- Animal shelters to post signs informing potential adopters if a dog is dangerous and inform those who do adopt of their responsibilities.

The bill makes the intentional removal of a microchip from a dangerous dog a third-degree felony and increases the maximum fine for violations of the dangerous dog statute to \$1,000.

### Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill may have an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on local governments to the extent animal control authorities are required to hold dogs during the course of an investigation.

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## ANALYSIS

### **EFFECT OF THE BILL:**

The bill provides that the act may be cited as the “Pam Rock Act.” (Section [1](#))

The bill revises provisions relating to [dangerous dogs](#) by requiring:

- A dog owner who has knowledge of a dog’s dangerous propensities to securely confine the dog in a proper enclosure as if the dog had been determined to be dangerous; (Section [2](#))
- Animal control authorities to hold a dog during the course of a dangerous dog investigation if the investigation arose out of an injury to, or altercation with, a person; (Section [5](#))
- Dogs that have been declared dangerous to be microchipped; (Section [5](#))
- Dogs that have been declared dangerous to be spayed or neutered; and (Section [5](#))
- The owner of a dangerous dog to obtain at least \$100,000 of liability insurance. (Section [5](#))
- Animal shelters to post signs informing potential adopters if a dog is dangerous and inform those who do adopt of their responsibilities. (Section [5](#))

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**DATE:** 3/20/2025

The bill amends the definition of a proper enclosure to include a locked, fenced yard that is suitable to prevent young children from entering and designed to prevent the dog from escaping over, under, or through the fence. (Section [4](#))

The bill makes the knowing and willful removal of a microchip from a dangerous dog a third-degree felony and increases the maximum fine for violations of the dangerous dog statute to \$500 per violation to \$1,000. (Section [5](#))

The bill makes editorial and conforming changes to current law provisions of statute concerning dangerous dogs. (Multiple Sections)

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2025. (Section [9](#))

## **FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:**

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT:**

The bill may have an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on local governments to the extent animal control authorities are required to hold dogs during the course of an investigation.

## **RELEVANT INFORMATION**

### **SUBJECT OVERVIEW:**

#### **[Dangerous Dogs](#)**

Part II of ch. 767, F.S., outlines the state’s “Dangerous Dogs” provisions, originally enacted in 1990.<sup>2</sup> The Legislature found that “dangerous dogs are an increasingly serious and widespread threat to the safety and welfare of the people of this state because of unprovoked attacks which cause injury to persons and domestic animals; that such attacks are in part attributable to the failure of the owners to confine and properly train and control their dogs; that existing laws inadequately address this growing problem; and that it is appropriate and necessary to impose uniform requirements on the owners of dangerous dogs.”<sup>3</sup>

Local governments may adopt ordinances to address safety and welfare concerns stemming from dog attacks on people or domestic animals, placing restrictions and additional requirements on owners of dangerous dogs, provided that no regulations may be specific to breed, weight, or size.<sup>4</sup>

A dangerous dog is defined as a dog who, according to the records of the appropriate authority, has:

- Aggressively bitten, attacked, endangered or inflicted severe injury<sup>5</sup> on a human being on public or private property;
- More than once severely injured or killed a domestic animal while off the owner’s property; or
- When unprovoked,<sup>6</sup> chased or approached a person upon the streets, sidewalks, or any public grounds in a menacing fashion or apparent attitude of attack, provided such actions are attested to in a sworn statement by one or more persons and dutifully investigated by the appropriate authority.<sup>7</sup>

Incidents involving a potentially dangerous dog are investigated by animal control officers.<sup>8</sup> In areas unserved by an animal control authority, the sheriff assumes the duties required of an animal control officer.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Agency Analysis of 2025 Senate Bill 572, p. 2 (Mar. 3, 2025) (on file with the House Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee).

<sup>2</sup> Ch. 90-180, Laws of Fla.

<sup>3</sup> S. [767.10, F.S.](#)

<sup>4</sup> S. [767.14, F.S.](#)

<sup>5</sup> “Severe injury” is defined as any physical injury resulting in broken bones, multiple bites, or disfiguring lacerations requiring sutures or reconstructive surgery. S. [767.11\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>6</sup> “Unprovoked” is defined as a victim who conducted himself or herself peacefully and lawfully was bitten or chased in a menacing fashion or attacked by a dog. S. [767.11\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>7</sup> S. [767.11\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>8</sup> “Animal control officer” means any individual employed, contracted with, or appointed by the animal control authority for the purpose of aiding in the enforcement of this act or any other law or ordinance relating to the licensure of animals, control of animals, or seizure and impoundment of animals and includes any state or local law enforcement officer or other employee

Upon receiving a report of a potentially dangerous dog, the animal control authority must investigate the incident, interview the owner, and require a sworn affidavit from any person who seeks to have a dog classified as dangerous.<sup>10</sup> An animal that is the subject of a dangerous dog investigation because of severe injury or death to a human being may be immediately confiscated by an animal control authority, placed in quarantine, if necessary, for the proper length of time, or impounded and held.<sup>11</sup> The owner of the dog is responsible for all boarding costs and other fees required to humanely and safely keep the animal pending any appeal or hearing. A dog being investigated as a dangerous dog that is not impounded with the animal control authority must be humanely and safely confined by the owner in a securely fenced or enclosed area pending the outcome of the investigation.<sup>12</sup> The owner must provide the address at which the animal resides to the animal control authority and may not relocate or transfer ownership of the animal pending the outcome of the investigation, including any hearing or appeals.

The animal control authority may not declare a dog as dangerous if:

- The injured person was unlawfully on the property or, if lawfully on the property, was tormenting, abusing, or assaulting the dog, or its owner or a family member; or
- The dog was protecting a person within the immediate vicinity of the dog from an unjustified attack or assault.<sup>13</sup>

After investigating, the animal control authority must initially determine whether sufficient cause exists to classify the dog as dangerous, and if sufficient cause is found, provide the owner with an opportunity for a hearing before making a final determination regarding the classification or penalty.<sup>14</sup> The animal control authority must provide written notice of sufficient cause and proposed penalty to the owner by registered mail, certified hand delivery, or service in conformity with how service of process is made.

The owner has seven calendar days from receiving the notice to file a written request for a hearing. If the owner requests a hearing, the hearing officer must hold the hearing as soon as possible, but no later than 21 calendar days and no sooner than five days after receiving the request for a hearing.<sup>15</sup> If a hearing is not timely requested, the authority's determination becomes final.

If a dog is classified as a dangerous dog due to an incident that causes severe injury to a human being, the animal control authority may require the dog be destroyed in an expeditious and humane manner based upon the nature and circumstances of the injury and the likelihood of a future threat to public safety, health, and welfare.<sup>16</sup> If a dog causes the death of a human being, the dog must be destroyed unless the dog is found to not be dangerous after hearing.<sup>17</sup>

Otherwise, within 14 days after the classification of the dog as a dangerous dog by the animal control authority, the owner must register the dog with the animal control authority and renew the certification annually.<sup>18</sup> An animal control authority may only issue a certificate or renewal to a person 18 years of age or older who provides sufficient evidence of:

- A current certificate of rabies vaccination;
- A proper enclosure to confine a dangerous dog and the posting of the premises with a clearly visible warning sign at all entry points that informs both children and adults of the presence of a dangerous dog on the property; and

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whose duties in whole or in part include assignments that involve seizure and impoundment of any animal. See [s. 767.11\(6\), F.S.](#)

<sup>9</sup> [S. 767.11\(5\), F.S.](#)

<sup>10</sup> [S. 767.12\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Ss. 767.12\(1\)\(a\) and 767.135, F.S.](#)

<sup>12</sup> [S. 767.12\(1\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>13</sup> [S. 767.12\(2\)\(a\)-\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>14</sup> [S. 767.12\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> [S. 767.12\(5\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>17</sup> [S. 767.135, F.S.](#)

<sup>18</sup> [S. 767.12\(5\)\(a\)1., F.S.](#)

- Permanent identification of the dog, such as a tattoo on the inside thigh or electronic implantation.<sup>19</sup>

The owner must immediately notify the animal control authority if the dog:

- Is loose or unconfined;
- Bites a person or attacks another animal;
- Is sold, given away, or dies; or
- Is moved to another address.<sup>20</sup>

If a dangerous dog is sold or given away, the owner must provide the name, address, and telephone number of the new owner to the animal control authority.<sup>21</sup> The new owner must abide by these requirements. If the dog is moved to another jurisdiction, the owner is responsible for informing the local animal control officer.

A dangerous dog must remain in its enclosure at all times unless it is muzzled and restrained by a chain or leash.<sup>22</sup>

Any violation of these requirements is a noncriminal infraction punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to civil penalties, the owner of a dog can be charged with the following criminal violations:

- First degree misdemeanor, if the dog has previously been declared dangerous and attacks or bites a person or domestic animal without provocation.<sup>24</sup>
- Second degree misdemeanor, if the dog has not previously been declared dangerous but causes severe injury to or death of any human and the owner had prior knowledge of, but recklessly disregarded, the dog's dangerous propensities.<sup>25</sup>
- Third degree felony, if the dog has previously been declared dangerous, attacks and causes severe injury to or death of any human.<sup>26</sup>

According to the Florida Department of Health, each year more than 600 Floridians are hospitalized because of injuries from dog bites, and about two people die from them. In August 2022, a postal worker was delivering mail when she was attacked by five dogs in Putnam County and died the next day.<sup>27</sup> An 86-year-old veteran had to have her leg amputated after being attacked by a neighbor's dog in early 2023 in Hawthorne.<sup>28</sup> In January 2025, an eight-year-old boy was attacked and killed by two dogs.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> S. [767.12\(5\)\(a\)2., F.S.](#)

<sup>21</sup> S. [767.12\(5\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>22</sup> S. [767.12\(5\)\(a\)3., F.S.](#)

<sup>23</sup> S. [767.12 \(7\), F.S.](#)

<sup>24</sup> S. [767.13\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>25</sup> S. [767.136\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>26</sup> S. [767.13\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>27</sup> Senait Gebregiorgis, [Florida bill aims to make 'dangerous dogs' registry, add tougher penalties for owners](#), KTVZ News Channel 21, (Jan. 5, 2024), (last visited Feb. 25, 2025).

<sup>28</sup> Anne Maxwell, [State senator's office drafting legislation to address dangerous dogs after attacks](#), News4Jax, (July 18, 2023), (last visited Feb. 25, 2025).

<sup>29</sup> Brenda Argueta, [Dogs That attacked and killed 8-year-old boy near DeLand have been euthanized](#), Click Orlando News, (Jan. 30, 2025), (last visited Feb. 25, 2025).

## BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
<a href="#">Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee</a>	16 Y, 0 N, As CS	3/19/2025	Darden	Burgess
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	Requires all dogs declared dangerous to be microchipped and makes removing the microchip a third-degree felony. Requires animal control authorities to post signs informing potential adopters if a dog is dangerous and informs adopters of their responsibilities.			
<a href="#">Civil Justice &amp; Claims Subcommittee</a>				
<a href="#">Agriculture &amp; Natural Resources Budget Subcommittee</a>				
<a href="#">State Affairs Committee</a>				

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**THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.**  
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