

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to domestic animals; amending s.
3 828.12, F.S.; requiring the Department of Law
4 Enforcement to post on its website specified
5 information for individuals convicted of specified
6 animal cruelty offenses; creating s. 828.291, F.S.;
7 providing purpose; providing construction; requiring
8 the Department of Business and Professional Regulation
9 to develop voluntary best management practices for dog
10 breeders in this state; requiring the department to
11 post certain information on its website; creating s.
12 828.2911, F.S.; requiring the department to establish
13 the voluntary Dog Awareness and Welfare Guidelines
14 (DAWG) Breeding Program; providing requirements for
15 participation in the program; providing for the
16 issuance, suspension, revocation, and use of program
17 certificates; providing for the deposit of certain
18 fees; requiring the department to adopt rules;
19 amending s. 828.29, F.S.; extending the period of time
20 after the sale of an animal that a consumer may return
21 or exchange the animal and receive a refund or receive
22 reimbursement for certain costs; requiring that a pet
23 sale financing agreement be terminated without penalty
24 under certain circumstances; removing a limit on
25 veterinary costs under certain circumstances;

26 requiring all financial terms be disclosed to the
 27 consumer before the sale of an animal; removing
 28 certain provisions relating to a consumer's waiver
 29 relinquishing his or her rights to return an animal;
 30 requiring a pet dealer to provide copies of specified
 31 medical records to a consumer; revising requirements
 32 for a required notice to a consumer; revising the text
 33 of the required notice; revising the definition of the
 34 term "pet dealer"; requiring a pet dealer to retain a
 35 copy of certain records for a specified period;
 36 providing construction; providing an effective date.

37

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

39

40 **Section 1. Subsection (7) of section 828.12, Florida**
 41 **Statutes, is amended, and subsection (8) is added to that**
 42 **section, to read:**

43 828.12 Cruelty to animals.—

44 (7) Before Beginning January 1, 2027 ~~2026~~, the Department
 45 of Law Enforcement shall post on its website, in a searchable
 46 format prescribed by the department, the name and all aliases,
 47 date of birth, race, counties of conviction, charges, case
 48 numbers, dispositions, description of any identifying marks and
 49 tattoos, and a photograph taken at the time of booking related
 50 to the animal cruelty offense of each individual ~~names of those~~

51 ~~individuals~~ who has ~~have~~ been convicted of, or who has ~~have~~
 52 entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to, regardless of
 53 adjudication, a violation of this section.

54 (8) Each clerk of court and county detention facility
 55 shall provide the Department of Law Enforcement with the
 56 information, data, and images required under subsection (7).

57 **Section 2. Section 828.291, Florida Statutes, is created**
 58 **to read:**

59 828.291 Best management practices for dog breeding.-

60 (1) The purpose of this section is to allow voluntary
 61 participation in best management practices for minimum standards
 62 of care, facility operations, and breeding practices for
 63 individuals or entities engaged in the breeding of dogs in order
 64 to protect animal welfare, promote responsible breeding, and
 65 ensure the health and safety of animals and consumers.

66 (2) This section may not be construed to prohibit a local
 67 jurisdiction from implementing requirements for individuals or
 68 entities engaged in the breeding of dogs.

69 (3) The Department of Business and Professional Regulation
 70 shall develop best management practices that individuals or
 71 entities engaged in the breeding of dogs may voluntarily adopt
 72 and implement. Such best management practices must include
 73 minimum standards of care, facility operations, and breeding
 74 practices for individuals or entities engaged in the breeding of
 75 dogs, including, but not limited to, the following:

76 (a) Breeding.
 77 (b) Feeding.
 78 (c) Housing.
 79 (d) Health.
 80 (e) Enrichment.
 81 (f) Selling and transferring, in accordance with s.
 82 828.29.
 83 (g) Recordkeeping, in accordance with s. 828.29.
 84 (4) The department shall post on its website guidance for
 85 the public about how to identify the dog breeders that are
 86 following best breeder practices and provide a checklist to use
 87 when purchasing a dog.
 88 (5) The department shall post on its website information
 89 regarding animal cruelty, including a description of conduct
 90 constituting animal cruelty under ss. 828.12 and 828.13, the
 91 penalties for such conduct, and instructions for reporting
 92 suspected animal cruelty or abuse to the appropriate local
 93 authorities, including the contact information for at least one
 94 appropriate authority for each county in the state.
 95 **Section 3. Section 828.2911, Florida Statutes, is created**
 96 **to read:**
 97 828.2911 Dog Awareness and Welfare Guidelines (DAWG)
 98 Breeder Program.—
 99 (1) The Department of Business and Professional Regulation
 100 shall establish the Dog Awareness and Welfare Guidelines (DAWG)

101 Breeder Program to recognize dog breeders who have voluntarily
102 adopted and implemented the best management practices for dog
103 breeding. The department shall certify any individual or entity
104 that the department has determined has voluntarily adopted and
105 implemented the best management practices for dog breeding
106 pursuant to s. 828.291 and who has complied with this section.
107 Such certification is valid for 2 years and dog breeders may
108 reapply at the expiration of such certification.

109 (2) Participants in the DAWG Breeder Program must agree to
110 submit to inspection by the department or its designee and pay
111 the actual cost of the inspection. Subject to appropriations,
112 the department or its designee may conduct an inspection of the
113 applicant's dog breeding program, including, but not limited to,
114 all animals located on an applicant's premises, the breeding and
115 housing facilities for such animals, and any health records or
116 records of sale for such animals maintained by the applicant.

117 (a) The department may contract with and designate local
118 law enforcement or animal services, if local staff and resources
119 are available, or any other public or private entity that the
120 department determines regularly conducts animal welfare
121 investigations to perform inspections or related investigative
122 activities. Private service providers may include Florida-
123 licensed veterinarians currently in good standing who have been
124 licensed for at least 10 years.

125 (b) Local governments or enforcement authorities may

126 contract with the department to conduct dog breeder inspections,
127 subject to the availability of local funding, staff, and
128 resources. If the local government or enforcement authority
129 lacks the staff or resources to perform dog breeder inspections,
130 such inspections may be conducted by a private provider
131 designated and approved by the department, provided that the
132 breeder pays the cost of the inspection.

133 (c) If sufficient resources are not available, the
134 applicant must wait until such resources are available or
135 contract with a private provider designated and approved by the
136 department in order to obtain certification.

137 (3) If the applicant passes inspection, the department
138 must provide the applicant a DAWG Breeder Program certificate.

139 (4) The department may suspend or revoke the certification
140 of any DAWG-certified dog breeder at any time if the department
141 discovers that the breeder has failed to maintain the best
142 management practices created pursuant to s. 828.291.

143 (5) A dog breeder that is certified by the program may
144 identify the certification in the breeder's professional
145 practice, including in marketing and advertising materials.

146 (6) Recognition by the program is not required for a dog
147 breeder to engage in dog breeding in this state.

148 (7) Any fees collected pursuant to this section shall be
149 deposited in the Professional Regulation Trust Fund within the
150 department.

151 (8) The department shall adopt rules to implement this
152 section.

153 **Section 4. Subsections (5) through (8), (10), (12), (13),**
154 **and (17) of section 828.29, Florida Statutes, are amended, and**
155 **subsection (18) is added to that section, to read:**

156 828.29 Dogs and cats transported or offered for sale;
157 health requirements; consumer guarantee; disclosures. —

158 (5) If, within 30 ~~14~~ days after ~~following~~ the sale by a
159 pet dealer of an animal subject to this section, a licensed
160 veterinarian of the consumer's choosing certifies that, at the
161 time of the sale, the animal was unfit for purchase due to
162 illness or disease, the presence of symptoms of a contagious or
163 infectious disease, or the presence of internal or external
164 parasites, excluding fleas and ticks; or if, within 1 year after
165 ~~following~~ the sale of an animal subject to this section, a
166 licensed veterinarian of the consumer's choosing certifies such
167 animal to be unfit for purchase due to a congenital or
168 hereditary disorder which adversely affects the health of the
169 animal; or if, within 1 year after ~~following~~ the sale of an
170 animal subject to this section, the breed, sex, or health of
171 such animal is found to have been misrepresented to the
172 consumer, the pet dealer shall afford the consumer the right to
173 choose one of the following options:

174 (a) The right to return the animal and receive a refund of
175 the purchase price, including any interest accrued and ~~the sales~~

176 | tax or fees paid or due from the purchaser, and reimbursement
177 | for reasonable veterinary costs directly related to the
178 | veterinarian's examination and certification that the animal ~~dog~~
179 | ~~or cat~~ is unfit for purchase pursuant to this section or ~~and~~
180 | directly related to necessary emergency services and treatment
181 | undertaken to relieve suffering of the animal. If the consumer
182 | financed the animal pursuant to a financing agreement with the
183 | pet dealer, the pet dealer must ensure that the financing
184 | arrangement is terminated without penalty to the consumer;

185 | (b) The right to return the animal and receive an exchange
186 | ~~dog or cat~~ of the consumer's choice of equivalent value, and
187 | reimbursement for reasonable veterinary costs directly related
188 | to the veterinarian's examination and certification that the
189 | animal ~~dog or cat~~ is unfit for purchase pursuant to this section
190 | or ~~and~~ directly related to necessary emergency services and
191 | treatment undertaken to relieve suffering of the animal; or

192 | (c) The right to retain the animal and receive
193 | reimbursement for reasonable veterinary costs for necessary
194 | services and treatment related to the attempt to cure or curing
195 | of the animal, or necessary emergency services or treatment
196 | undertaken to relieve the suffering of the animal related to
197 | such services received within 1 year after purchase ~~dog or cat~~.

198 |
199 | Reimbursement for veterinary costs may not exceed the purchase
200 | price of the animal. The cost of veterinary services is

201 reasonable if such costs are comparable to the cost of similar
202 services rendered by other licensed veterinarians in proximity
203 to the treating veterinarian and the services rendered are
204 related to the examination and ~~appropriate for the~~ certification
205 of fitness by the veterinarian.

206 (6) All financial terms must be disclosed by the pet
207 dealer to the consumer before the sale of an animal, including
208 the total cost of the animal, any fees, taxes, and, if
209 applicable, financing charges or interest over the period
210 financed

211 ~~(6) A consumer may sign a waiver relinquishing his or her~~
212 ~~right to return the dog or cat for congenital or hereditary~~
213 ~~disorders. In the case of such waiver, the consumer has 48~~
214 ~~normal business hours, excluding weekends and holidays, in which~~
215 ~~to have the animal examined by a licensed veterinarian of the~~
216 ~~consumer's choosing. If the veterinarian certifies that, at the~~
217 ~~time of sale, the dog or cat was unfit for purchase due to a~~
218 ~~congenital or hereditary disorder, the pet dealer must afford~~
219 ~~the consumer the right to choose one of the following options:~~

220 ~~(a) The right to return the animal and receive a refund of~~
221 ~~the purchase price, including sales tax, but excluding the~~
222 ~~veterinary costs related to the certification that the dog or~~
223 ~~cat is unfit; or~~

224 ~~(b) The right to return the animal and receive an exchange~~
225 ~~dog or cat of the consumer's choice of equivalent value, but not~~

226 | ~~a refund of the veterinary costs related to the certification~~
227 | ~~that the dog or cat is unfit.~~

228 | (7) Before the sale of an animal, a pet dealer must
229 | provide to the consumer copies of records of all medical
230 | examinations or tests that were conducted on the animal and any
231 | medication given before the purchase of the animal. A pet dealer
232 | may specifically state at the time of sale, in writing to the
233 | consumer, the presence of specific congenital or hereditary
234 | disorders, in which case the consumer has no right to any refund
235 | or exchange for those identified disorders, if the consumer
236 | signs a notification that indicates that the animal has been
237 | examined by a veterinarian and it has been determined that the
238 | animal has the identified specific congenital or hereditary
239 | disorder.

240 | (8) The refund or exchange required by subsection (5) must
241 | ~~or subsection (6) shall~~ be made by the pet dealer not later than
242 | 10 business days after ~~following~~ receipt of a signed veterinary
243 | certification as required in subsection (5) ~~or subsection (6)~~.
244 | The consumer must provide notice and documentation to ~~notify~~ the
245 | pet dealer within 7 ~~2~~ business days after receipt of the
246 | veterinarian's determination that the animal is unfit. ~~The~~
247 | ~~written certification of unfitness must be presented to the pet~~
248 | ~~dealer not later than 3 business days following receipt thereof~~
249 | ~~by the consumer.~~

250 | (10) If a pet dealer wishes to contest a demand for

251 veterinary expenses, refund, or exchange made by a consumer
252 under this section, the dealer may require the consumer to
253 produce the animal for examination by a licensed veterinarian
254 designated by the dealer. Upon such examination, if the consumer
255 and the dealer are unable to reach an agreement that constitutes
256 one of the options set forth in subsection (5) ~~or subsection (6)~~
257 within 10 business days after ~~following~~ receipt of the animal
258 for such examination, the consumer may initiate an action in a
259 court of competent jurisdiction or the small claims court of the
260 county court in which the consumer resides to recover or obtain
261 reimbursement of veterinary expenses and a ~~refund~~, or an
262 exchange, as set forth in subsection (5), and may collect
263 punitive damages in an amount not less than \$2,500, at the
264 discretion of the court.

265 (12) Every pet dealer who sells an animal to a consumer
266 must provide the consumer at the time of sale with a printed,
267 written notice in 14-point bold font to be signed by the
268 consumer, ~~printed or typed,~~ which is separate from the contract.
269 The pet dealer shall retain a copy of the signed notice, and the
270 consumer must be given a copy of the signed notice. Such notice
271 must read ~~reads~~ as follows:

272
273 RIGHT TO CANCEL

274 Florida consumers have certain rights under s. 828.29,
275 Florida Statutes. You have the right to return the

276 animal, exchange the animal, and receive reimbursement
277 for certain veterinary expenses under certain
278 circumstances. Please have your new pet seen by a
279 veterinarian immediately. A copy of this law is
280 attached to this notice.

281
282 It is the consumer's right, pursuant to section
283 828.29, Florida Statutes, to receive a certificate of
284 veterinary inspection with each animal ~~dog or cat~~
285 purchased from a pet dealer. Such certificate shall
286 list all vaccines and deworming medications
287 administered to the animal and list any medical
288 diagnosis and treatments ~~shall state that the animal~~
289 ~~has been examined by a Florida-licensed veterinarian~~
290 ~~who certifies that, to the best of the veterinarian's~~
291 ~~knowledge, the animal was found to have been healthy~~
292 ~~at the time of the veterinary examination.~~ In the
293 event that the consumer purchases the animal and finds
294 it to have been unfit for purchase as provided in
295 section 828.29(5), Florida Statutes, the consumer must
296 notify the pet dealer within 7 ~~2-business~~ days of the
297 veterinarian's determination that the animal was
298 unfit. The consumer has the right to retain, return,
299 or exchange the animal and receive reimbursement for
300 certain related veterinary services rendered to the

301 animal, subject to the right of the dealer to have the
 302 animal examined by another veterinarian.

303
 304 ...(Signature of Animal Owner or Lessee, Purchaser, or
 305 Authorized Person)...

306
 307 (13) For the purposes of this section ~~subsections (5) -- (12)~~
 308 ~~and (16)~~, the term "pet dealer" means any person, firm,
 309 partnership, corporation, or other association which, in the
 310 ordinary course of business, engages in the sale of more than
 311 three ~~two~~ litters, or 30 ~~20~~ dogs or cats, per year, whichever is
 312 greater, to the public. The term ~~This definition~~ includes
 313 breeders of animals who sell such animals directly to a
 314 consumer. The term does not include not-for-profit entities that
 315 offer animals for sale or adoption as long as the total cost of
 316 such sale or adoption does not exceed \$500, including all taxes
 317 and fees, or other costs.

318 (17) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, a
 319 person who violates ~~any provision of~~ this section commits a
 320 misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s.
 321 775.082 or s. 775.083.

322 (18) Any record provided to a consumer related to the sale
 323 of an animal under this section must be maintained by the pet
 324 dealer for a period of at least 3 years after the date of sale.

325 **Section 5.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.