

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SPONSOR STATEMENT FOR HB 147

“An Act relating to the investigation of cruelty to animals complaints; relating to the seizure of animals; relating to the destruction of animals; relating to a bond or security posted for the costs of care for an animal; relating to the inclusion of an animal in a protective order and the crimes and arrests for violating that protective order; and relating to ownership upon divorce.”

This bill, House Bill 147, accomplishes three things: it holds an owner responsible for the reasonable third-party costs of caring for animals lawfully seized due to cruelty or neglect; it provides statutory protection for animals in protective orders, permits granting exclusive temporary custody of the animal to the victim; and permits consideration of the well-being of animals when deciding their ownership in divorce and dissolution proceedings.

1. Cost of Care

Amends animal statutes to require owners of animals lawfully seized for neglect or cruelty to pay their cost of care through bond or other security. This will shift the burden from governmental agencies, or independent shelters, and rescue agencies to the animals’ owners – saving tax dollars and animals’ lives. The bill also allows the adoption and rehoming of seized animals if the owners surrender them or fail to pay the costs of care ordered or post court-ordered bond.

2. Domestic Violence

Amends domestic violence statutes to allow courts to allow for the inclusion of animals, including for their temporary care, in domestic violence protective orders.

3. Divorce and Dissolution

Amends divorce and marriage dissolution statutes to require consideration of animals’ well-being when adjudicating their ownership or joint ownership.