

Ponce's Law

HB 473 by Representative Leek; SB 952 by Senator Steube

These bills increase the points for animal cruelty in Florida's sentencing guidelines and clarify that judges are authorized to prohibit ownership or contact with animals for defendants convicted of animal cruelty. HB 472 is in its second of three committees. SB 952 received three committee references and has not been heard to date. The Animal Law Section has received approval to support this legislation.

Lost or Stray Dogs or Cats

HB 823 by Representative Cruz; No Senate companion to date

This bill requires shelters to have written policies and procedures in place to ensure that every reasonable effort is made to quickly and reliably return owned animal to their owners. It received three committee references and has not been heard to date. The Animal Law Section has received approval to support this legislation.

Animal Hoarding

SB 86 by Senator Hukill; No House companion to date

This bill defines the term "animal hoarding" and makes animal hoarding a third degree felony. It received four committee references and has not been heard to date.

Importation

HB 153 by Representative Porter; SB 132 by Senator Steube

Among other provisions, these bills prohibit animal shelters, animal rescue organizations, humane organizations, and animal control agencies from importing animals into Florida and prohibit individuals from importing animals into Florida for transfer to any of these animal welfare entities. It includes criminal penalties and deems these entities as pet dealers if they import an animal. They require the Commission of Agriculture and Consumer Services to bring an action in a court of competent jurisdiction against an entity or individual who violates these provisions. Both of these bills received three committee references. Neither bill has been heard to date.

Nonnative Animals

HB 145 by Representative Beshears; SB 168 by Senator Steube

These bills require the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to establish a pilot project for the eradication of priority invasive species. They also require tagging of certain nonnative species prior to sale in Florida. HB 145 is in its second of three committees. SB 168 received three committee references and has not been heard to date.

Black Bears

SB 156 by Senator Stewart; HB 559 by Representative Olszewski

These bills create the "Florida Black Bear Protection Act." Among other provisions, they prohibit FWC from allowing the recreational hunting of Florida black bears mothering cubs that weigh less than 100 pounds under a black bear hunting permit and prohibit prescribed burns in February in designated black

bear habitat. SB 156 received four committee references and HB 559 received three committee references. Neither bill has been heard to date.

Companion Animal Public-Private Partnership Act

HB 249 by Representative B. Watson; SB 1356 by Senator Rader

This bill provides that an animal shelter may not euthanize an animal if an animal rescue organization has indicated that it will take the animal. It requires shelters to release dangerous dogs unless they have been deemed dangerous by a court. It also requires shelters to release sick animals unless the animal is experiencing irremediable physical suffering or has rabies. This bill received two committee references and has not been heard to date.

Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs

HB 763 by Representative Abruzzo; SB 982 by Senator Powell

These bills create a program within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to provide care for retired law enforcement dogs up to \$1,500 annually per dog. Both bills received three committee references and neither has been heard to date.

Emergency Evacuation of Domestic Companion and Service Animals

HB 907 by Representative Olszewski; No Senate companion to date

This bill prohibits leaving a domestic companion animal or service animal outdoors and unattended when an area has been evacuated. If an animal cannot be evacuated with the owner, the animal must be delivered to a kennel, shelter, or pound, or secured indoors. This bill received three committee references and has not been heard to date.

Disaster Response and Preparedness

SB 1006 by Senator Montford; No House companion to date

Among other provisions, this bill creates a definition for the term "comfort animal" and authorizes any individual to bring a service animal or comfort animal to a special needs shelter. "Comfort animal" is defined as an animal which provides emotional support to help improve the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive condition of an individual. The bill received three committee references and has not been heard. This bill received three committee references and has not been heard to date.