

1 SB435
2 159663-1
3 By Senator Marsh
4 RFD: Governmental Affairs
5 First Read: 05-MAR-14

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8 SYNOPSIS: Under existing law, there is no recognized
9 uniform process for licensing an animal control
10 officer hired by a municipality or county within
11 the state.

12 This bill would provide for uniform state
13 training and certification of county or municipal
14 animal control officers by the Alabama Animal
15 Control Association and provide for continuing
16 education.

17
18 A BILL
19 TO BE ENTITLED
20 AN ACT

21
22 Relating to animal control officers; to establish a
23 state procedure for training and certifying a county or
24 municipal animal control officer; and to provide for minimum
25 standards and continuing education requirements.

26 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

1 Section 1. The following words shall have the
2 following meanings:

3 (1) ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER. A person employed by a
4 county or municipality who performs animal control functions,
5 who may be authorized to issue citations for civil infractions
6 such as animals at large, no rabies tags, dangerous dogs, and
7 improper housing or care of an animal. Animal control officers
8 may not bear arms or make arrests unless they are certified by
9 the Alabama Peace Officers' Standards and Training Commission
10 (APOST). Certified animal control officers may wear a
11 distinctive uniform and a badge that states Animal Control
12 Officer and the county or city of employment. Certified animal
13 control officers may be authorized to carry bite sticks,
14 pepper spray, or to use chemical immobilization devices.

15 (2) CITATION. A written notice, issued to a person
16 by a certified animal control officer, that the officer has
17 probable cause to believe that the person has committed a
18 civil infraction and that the county or city court will hear
19 the charge. Citations may be issued for no rabies tags,
20 animals at large, animal cruelty/neglect, and any other
21 offense as deemed appropriate by a county or city.

22 (3) CERTIFICATION. County and municipally employed
23 animal control officers who successfully complete a minimum
24 standards training course that includes, but is not limited
25 to, training regarding issuing civil citations, search and
26 seizure, animal handling, animal cruelty investigations,
27 courtroom demeanor, and officer safety may be licensed as an

1 animal control officer by the Alabama Animal Control
2 Association. Additional courses may be required for bite
3 stick, pepper spray, or chemical immobilization certification.
4 Advanced certification by APOST is required for an animal
5 control officer to make arrests or carry a firearm.

6 Section 2. In accordance with industry standards
7 within the United States, the Alabama Animal Control
8 Association (AACCA) shall develop and implement a uniform
9 training and certification curriculum for animal control
10 officers within two years of the effective date of this act
11 which shall also include a specific program for continuing
12 education. The AACCA may seek advice, participation, and
13 counsel in developing this program from the Alabama Humane
14 Federation, American Humane Association, Humane Society of the
15 United States, Alabama Veterinary Medical Association,
16 National Animal Control Association, Alabama Sheriff's
17 Association, Alabama Peace Officers' Standards and Training
18 Commission (APOST), the Alabama Attorney General, Alabama
19 Office of Prosecution Services, Alabama League of
20 Municipalities, Alabama Department of Public Health,
21 Department of Agriculture and Industries, and others
22 recognized in the industry or government involved or impacted
23 by animal control issues. The curriculum and certification
24 process shall be implemented no later than two years after the
25 effective date of this act and continuing education
26 requirements and programs shall be implemented within one year
27 thereafter.

1 Section 3. (a) For minimum state certification, the
2 animal control officer curriculum shall include mandatory
3 training and proficiency qualifications for the following:

4 (1) State and local laws governing animal control,
5 protection, and animal cruelty.

6 (2) Animal health and disease recognition, control,
7 and prevention.

8 (3) The humane care and treatment of animals,
9 including standards for care and control of animals in an
10 animal shelter.

11 (4) Standards and procedures for the transportation
12 of animals.

13 (5) Principles and procedures for capturing and
14 handling stray domestic animals and wildlife, including
15 principles and procedures to be followed with respect to
16 instruments used specifically for deterring the bite of an
17 animal.

18 (6) Basic first aid for injured animals.

19 (7) The documentation of animal cruelty evidence and
20 courtroom procedures.

21 (8) Civil and criminal investigation procedures on
22 private or public property.

23 (9) Report writing and courtroom testimony.

24 (10) Communications and public relations.

25 (11) Crisis intervention and safety in animal
26 control.

1 (12) State and federal laws regarding the possession
2 of controlled substances and other medications involved in
3 animal care.

4 (13) Violations relating to animal control or
5 cruelty and issuing citations for such.

6 (14) Use of specific devices to subdue an animal,
7 including pepper spray or chemical immobilization.

8 (15) Safety for the officer, community, citizens,
9 and animals as it relates to animal control.

10 (16) Any other topics pertinent to animal control.

11 (b) The AACA, in conjunction with APOST, may develop
12 an advanced certification for animal control officers who may
13 be authorized to carry a weapon only for the purpose of animal
14 control issues and who may be authorized to make arrests for
15 specific violations.

16 Section 4. The AACA shall report to the Legislature
17 no later than the tenth day of the 2015 Regular Session
18 regarding the progress of developing and implementing this
19 training curriculum and certification with suggested
20 legislation for mandatory compliance.

21 Section 5. This act shall become effective on the
22 first day of the third month following its passage and
23 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.