

SB361 INTRODUCED



1 SB361
2 FKTN4C5-1
3 By Senator Gudger
4 RFD: State Governmental Affairs
5 First Read: 10-Mar-26



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SYNOPSIS:

Under existing law, animals are afforded protections regarding their care in this state.

This bill would require certain methods be used when tethering or confining a dog.

This bill would require certain minimum care be provided to dogs kept outside using one of these methods.

This bill would exempt certain persons and activities from these requirements.

This bill would provide a criminal penalty for tethering or confining a dog in violation of this act.

This bill would also authorize county and municipal animal control officers to inspect and enforce violations of this act.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to dogs; to provide methods for tethering and confining dogs; to provide certain standards of care for dogs kept outside; to exempt certain persons and activities; to provide criminal penalties for violations; and to authorize



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29 agents of political subdivisions to inspect violations.

30 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

31 Section 1. For purposes of this act, the following
32 terms have the following meanings:

33 (1) ADEQUATE FOOD. Food that is offered in suitable
34 intervals and in sufficient amounts to prevent starvation or
35 significant risk to a dog's health from lack of food.

36 (2) ADEQUATE WATER. Potable water that is offered in
37 suitable intervals and in sufficient amounts to prevent
38 dehydration or significant risk to a dog's health from lack of
39 water.

40 (3) PROPERLY FITTED. When naturally worn by a dog, a
41 collar or harness that:

42 a. Is appropriately sized for the dog based on the
43 dog's measurements and body weight; and

44 b. Does not choke the dog or impede the dog's normal
45 breathing or swallowing.

46 (4) TETHER. A chain, leash, cable, rope, trolley
47 system, or other similar device used to tie or otherwise
48 connect a dog to a stationary object, including a structure,
49 doghouse, pole, or tree.

50 Section 2. (a) (1) A person may not tether a dog to a
51 stationary object, including a tree, pole, stake, or
52 structure, unless the dog is tethered via a trolley system in
53 accordance with all of the following:

54 a. The tether is not unreasonably heavy in relation to
55 the weight of the dog.

56 b. The tether does not allow the dog to leave the



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57 property of the owner or person responsible for the dog.

58 c. The tether is connected to only one dog.

59 d. The tether is attached to a properly fitted collar
60 or harness worn by the dog.

61 e. The tether has a swivel on both ends to minimize
62 tangling.

63 f. The tether allows the dog continuous access at all
64 times to adequate food, adequate water, and shelter as
65 described in Section 3.

66 g. The tether does not extend over an object or edge
67 that could result in injury or strangulation of the dog.

68 h. The tether is situated in a manner to prevent
69 entanglement with other objects or animals.

70 (2) A logging chain, choke collar, or pinch collar may
71 not be used to tether a dog.

72 (b) A person may not restrain or restrict a dog's
73 movement by confining the dog within an enclosure unless in
74 accordance with all of the following:

75 (1) The enclosure is secure, fully fenced, and has
76 adequate space for the dog to run.

77 (2) The enclosure is constructed with a sturdy
78 material, including chain link and electronic fencing, with
79 all four sides enclosed, and with a minimum height sufficient
80 to confine the dog if not an electronic fence.

81 (3) The dog has continuous access at all times to
82 adequate food, adequate water, and shelter as described in
83 Section 3.

84 (4) The enclosure does not allow the dog to leave the



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85 property of the owner or person responsible for the dog.

86 (c) Subsections (a) and (b) do not apply to any of the
87 following:

88 (1) A licensed veterinary practice that tethers or
89 confines a dog in the course of its practice.

90 (2) A boarding kennel or public or private animal
91 shelter with secure enclosures for the temporary boarding or
92 housing of dogs.

93 (3) An exhibition, trial, show, contest, or other
94 temporary event in which skill, breeding, or stamina of a dog
95 is judged or examined.

96 (4) A dog that is used for obedience purposes or
97 receives training in a lawful manner to hunt or retrieve
98 wildlife.

99 (5) A service or assistance dog.

100 (6) A licensed grooming shop or facility during the
101 grooming of a dog.

102 (7) Any emergency circumstance during which tethering
103 or confining a dog is necessary but not exceeding a reasonable
104 amount of time with respect to the weather.

105 (8) An individual walking a dog on a leash.

106 Section 3. In addition to any other requirement by law,
107 a person leaving or keeping a dog tethered or confined outside
108 shall provide the dog with access to shelter that complies
109 with all of the following:

110 (1) Allows the dog to remain dry and protected from the
111 elements and inclement weather, including providing shade for
112 the dog and containing bedding for cold weather when



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113 necessary.

114 (2) Has a roof, walls, and a solid floor.

115 (3) Has space for the dog to stand up, turn around, lie
116 down in a normal position, and extend its limbs.

117 (4) Is constructed or manufactured of durable materials
118 and provides adequate ventilation.

119 (5) Is free from accumulated waste, standing water, and
120 debris.

121 (6) Allows the dog unlimited access to the shelter.

122 Section 4. This act does not apply to any of the
123 following:

124 (1) A dog whose purpose is or that is receiving
125 training in conduct that is directly related to the business
126 of shepherding or herding livestock, cultivating agricultural
127 products, hunting, or retrieving.

128 (2) An individual tethering or confining a dog near a
129 place of business while the individual is inside or otherwise
130 interacting with the business, so long as:

131 a. The dog is tethered or confined for a reasonable
132 amount of time with respect to the weather; and

133 b. The dog is tethered or confined in a reasonable
134 location near the place of business.

135 (3) The temporary tethering or confining of a dog at
136 any campsite, recreation area, or home so long as the dog is
137 tethered or confined for a reasonable amount of time with
138 respect to the weather.

139 Section 5. (a) The governing body of a county or
140 municipality may appoint one or more animal control officers



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141 to investigate alleged violations of this act. An
142 investigating officer shall not be required to be a certified
143 law enforcement officer.

144 (b) Upon having probable cause that a violation of this
145 act has occurred, a certified law enforcement officer may do
146 either of the following:

147 (1) Remove a dog from its present location if he or she
148 believes the animal's life is in danger.

149 (2) Order the owner to provide care to the dog at the
150 owner's expense to comply with this act.

151 (c) The removal of a dog or the issuance of an order to
152 provide care to a dog shall be subject to the hearing and
153 disposition requirements and procedures provided in Sections
154 13A-11-244 and 13A-11-245, Code of Alabama 1975.

155 (d) A county, municipality, animal control officer, or
156 certified law enforcement officer, acting in good faith, may
157 not be liable for any actions taken pursuant to this act,
158 regardless of whether a dog that is removed is returned to its
159 owner.

160 Section 6. A person who violates this act shall pay the
161 full costs of boarding and providing veterinarian care to the
162 dog and be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor for a first offense
163 and a Class A misdemeanor for any subsequent offense.

164 Section 7. This act shall become effective on October
165 1, 2026.