

2018 -- H 7986

LC005214

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2018

A N A C T

RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Introduced By: Representatives O'Brien, Almeida, Williams, McEntee, and Ucci

Date Introduced: March 22, 2018

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 4-1-37 of the General Laws in Chapter 4-1 entitled "Cruelty to
2 Animals" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **4-1-37. Immunity from suit.**

4 Any [person entrusted with the care and custody of an animal, including, but not limited](#)
5 [to, any](#) Rhode Island licensed veterinarian, [veterinarian technician, animal shelter or animal](#)
6 [kennel](#), shall be held harmless from either criminal or civil liability arising out of any reports,
7 either oral or written, made to local and/or state police, animal control officials or officers of
8 private organizations devoted to humane treatment of animals, concerning any animal that the
9 veterinarian knows or reasonably believed to be abandoned, neglected, or abused, and shall be
10 immune from suit by reason of making the report. Provided, however, that a veterinarian who
11 participates or reports in bad faith or with malice shall not be protected under the provisions of
12 this ~~section~~ [chapter](#).

13 SECTION 2. Chapter 4-1 of the General Laws entitled "Cruelty to Animals" is hereby
14 amended by adding thereto the following section:

15 **4-1-26.1. Reports of abandoned, neglected or abused animals.**

16 [\(a\) Any Rhode Island licensed veterinarian, veterinarian technician, animal shelter,](#)
17 [animal kennel or other person entrusted with the care or custody of an animal shall report to any](#)
18 [police department \(local or state\), animal control officials or officers of private organizations](#)
19 [devoted to the humane treatment of animals, the condition of any animal that the parties entrusted](#)

1 with care or custody of an animal knows or reasonably believes to be abandoned, as defined in §
2 4-1-26, neglected, or abused, and shall be immune from suit pursuant to the provisions of § 4-1-
3 37. Any party who fails to report pursuant to this section shall be fined not exceeding five
4 hundred dollars (\$500).

5 (b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to impose a duty to further investigate
6 observed or reasonably suspected animal abandonment, cruel neglect, or abuse.

7 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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1 This act would require any person entrusted with care and control of an animal to report
2 cruelty thereto to the proper authorities and shall also be granted immunity for a good faith report.

3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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