

PA13-105

HB6323

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2013**

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DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

And a correction. Will the Clerk please call
Calendar Number 269.

THE CLERK:

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A favorable -- Calendar Number 269, favor -- on
page 14, favorable report of the joint standing
committee on Planning and Development, House Bill
6323, AN ACT CONCERNING ADOPTION OF FEES FOR DOGS.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (148th):

Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move for acceptance of the joint committee's
favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

The question is on acceptance of the joint
committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

Representative Fox, you have the floor, sir.

REP. FOX (148th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the underlying bill allows a
municipality to charge an individual who purchases a
dog as a pet from a municipal pound any costs it

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incurred to have the dog spayed, neutered or vaccinated.

Madam Speaker, the Clerk has an amendment, LCO 6179. I ask the Clerk to please call the amendment and that I be granted leave of the chamber to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 6179, which will be designated House Amendment Schedule "A."

THE CLERK:

House Amendment Schedule "A," LCO 6179, as introduced by Representative Rojas, et al.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

The Representative seeks the leave -- of leave of the chamber to summarize the amendment. Is there objection to the summarization? Is there objection?

Hearing none, Representative Fox, you may proceed with summarization.

REP. FOX (148th):

Thank you, Madam -- thank you, Madam Speaker.

The underlying amendment provides a -- a limit that the municipality may charge the individual, caps that fee at \$150.

Madam Speaker, I move adoption.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

The question before the chamber is adoption of House Amendment Schedule "A." Will you remark on the amendment?

Representative Aman.

REP. AMAN (14th):

Madam Speaker, the bill did have a problem in that it left vacant the amount of money they could be charged. I think the amendment addresses that. The \$150 is a reasonable charge for someone to -- adopting a dog or a cat to have it spayed or neutered appropriately, so I will be supporting the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Sawyer of the 55th.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A question, through you, to the proponent of the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Please frame your question, ma'am.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, ma'am.

Where it says it should be provided such charge

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shall not exceed \$150, would that also include, besides spay and neutering, say there was a torn ligament in a knee because the dog had been found after a car accident, or is it just referring to spay and neutering?

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fox, will you respond?

REP. FOX (148th):

Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the fine representative, the \$150 fee is for fees incurred to have the dog spayed, neutered or vaccinated, so it is limited to those three instances.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

And through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Sawyer, you may proceed.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you.

Is it -- if there were larger costs due to other medical issues due to an accident, say a car strike, would they be allowed to extend those fees or is that something that the pound and the veterinarian's office absorb.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (148th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And to the representative, the town would incur those costs.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Sawyer, you still have the floor, ma'am.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you and I appreciate that clarification.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Will you remark further? Will you remark further?

Representative Lavielle from the 143rd.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Good evening to you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Good evening to you, ma'am.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Just one question to the proponent if I may.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Please frame your question.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you so much.

The \$150 would that -- could that be extended if there were additional medical complications due to the spay or neutering operation?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fox, will you respond, sir?

REP. FOX (148th):

Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

And I thank the representative for her question.

In response, the answer is no.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Lavielle, you still have the floor, madam.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you. I think that's all I needed to know on the amendment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Will you respond further on the amendment? Will you respond further on the amendment?

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If not, I will try your minds. All those in favor please signify by saying, aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

All those opposed, nay.

The ayes have it and the amendment is adopted.

Will you refer further on the bill as amended?

Will you refer further -- remark -- I'm sorry --
remark further on the bill as amended?

Representative Aman of the 14th.

REP. AMAN (14th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Through you, I do have a couple of questions for the proponent of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Frame your question, sir.

REP. AMAN (14th):

Yes, the cost of the \$150 they may charge, currently, they would, without this bill, the town was limited to a \$5 fee, however, there is a question about the \$45 that is currently a state program for neutering dogs, and I would like the Chairman to address how that \$45 is allocated under this bill.

Through you, Mr. -- Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fox, will you respond, sir?

REP. FOX (148th):

Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

And I thank the representative for his question. The \$45 fee to which the representative refers is -- is -- allows the individual to access the voucher program.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Aman, you still have the -- the floor, sir.

REP. AMAN (14th):

Yes. This \$45 fee, would that go to the town that would raise if they charged the maximum of 150, give the town the ability to receive \$195 in fees or does the \$45 have to go to the person who is adopting the dog?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (148th):

Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

And to the representative, the \$45 fee, I believe, is directed towards the state, whereas the \$150 fee is directed towards the municipality.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Aman.

REP. AMAN (14th):

I think -- I just think I want to rephrase that. The town, after neutering a dog, would they -- and they were charging the 150, would they receive 150 plus -- from the recipient of the dog, plus 45 if they applied for the state voucher for a total of 195 or would the person adopting the dog be entitled to having paid 150 getting the \$45 back, and if this a question for the purpose of legislative intent.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (148th):

Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

And I think I understand the representative's question, and I believe to respond it -- to respond to it, the -- and again, I apologize for -- if I repeat myself, but the \$150 fee goes to -- goes to the

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municipality to reimburse the municipality for costs associated with vaccinating, spaying or neutering the -- the dog, whereas the \$45 voucher program -- that -- that fee goes to the state.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Aman, you still have the floor, sir.

REP. AMAN (14th):

The -- through you, Madam Speaker, the \$45 state program is the one where the state pays -- you're going to receive a voucher and you're allowed to go to the state and say, here's my voucher, the dog was neutered, send me a check for \$45. And my question still goes to, does the municipality have the right to say I neutered the dog, send me -- the state send me the check for \$45? Or does the individual adopting the dog get the voucher, sends it in, and gets the \$45. So the real question is it's a small amount of money but it's probably for many towns the difference between the real cost of neutering a dog and the \$150 that they could collect. So my question is who was the -- who would be the recipient of the program for \$45 sent by the state of Connecticut to someone who

neuters a dog?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (148th):

Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

And I believe I understand the representative's question. The -- the municipality can have access to the \$45 voucher program, as well as being reimbursed up to \$150 for costs associated with spaying, neutering or vaccinating the dog. And for -- if it -- if it clarifies further and I believe what the representative may be getting at, and I don't mean to misinterpret his question, but there's the potential there for a municipality to have access to upwards of \$195.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Aman, you still have the floor, sir.

REP. AMAN (14th):

I thank you. That was also my understanding of the program that it was to try to get more dogs adopted and at a price that the municipality would not

have to absorb and incur a large cost to have done.

So I do think it's a program that does work. The Agricultural Department that is sponsoring the vouchers, looking at the last few years, they've been allocated more money than they spent, so I do think that there's sufficient funds and the program that the state is running to reimburse the municipalities for part of their cost.

One of the problems that we heard in testimony was people would adopt a dog, take the \$45 voucher, never get around to having it neutered, never cash in the voucher either, but the goal of the program of having dogs that had come from a shelter or pound, neutered or spayed was not being followed through. So, hopefully, this will correct some of those problems and allow the municipalities to become more active within the adoption world of dogs.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on the bill that's amended? Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

If not, will staff and guests please come to the

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well of the House. Will the members please take your seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll.

The House of Representatives is voting by roll. Will members please return to the chamber immediately.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted? Will the members please check the board to determine if your vote is properly cast?

If all members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 6323 as amended by House "A."

Total Number Voting 133

Necessary for Passage 67

Those voting Yea 133

Those voting Nay 0

Those absent and not voting 17

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

The bill, as amended, is passed.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 116.

THE CLERK:

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SENATOR CASSANO: Right. And the key to this obviously is that -- the taxpayer pays both sides of the bill.

RONALD THOMAS: Exactly. Exactly. Again I mean some towns are doing a good job, you know, it kind of depends on the relationship -- the historical relationship between the town side and the education side, who the superintendent is, that sort of thing. But, you know, again this is a measure that we think is not heavy-handed and that really could make for some greater savings on the local level and help out the taxpayers.

SENATOR CASSANO: Thank you very much.

RONALD THOMAS: Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO: Gordon Willard, John Filchak, and Joshua Ghiroli. Gordon Willard. John Filchak.

JOHN FILCHAK: Good afternoon, Senator Cassano, members of the Committee. My name is John Filchak, I'm the Executive Director of the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments representing 12 towns. And I'm here today to talk about three bills, two of which deal with dogs. We operate a regional animal services program and have since 2004, and deal with hundreds of dogs each year.

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And first I want to talk about 6311, the ACT PROHIBITING MUNICIPALITIES FROM ADOPTING BREED SPECIFIC DANGEROUS DOG ORDINANCES. We would support that because we see no correlation between breed and temperament. As I said, we deal with hundreds of dogs and whether they're small, large, Pit Bulls, mixed breeds, pure breeds, some bite, some don't. We're almost -- almost always it's the owner's fault, it's not

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the dog's fault in terms of how it's been brought up, how it's been treated in terms of how dangerous it might get. So we agree with that bill.

Also on 6323, we would support that as well. We would very much like to be able to spay and neuter and do a complete vaccination and check on all of our animals. We're not currently -- we currently cannot do that for financial reasons, and this would give us a great option that we don't currently have. We would ask that it be expanded to cats as well and other domestic animals.

Cats, currently I think we have 35 or 40 cats at our facility and we deal with probably an equal amount of cats each year and would like to send all those out rabies vaccinated, spayed and neutered because we've got just an amazing feral cat population out there from unwanted cats. And we don't think that if we add that fee on that it would in any way hinder our ability to adopt out those animals. So for those reasons we would like to support those two.

And then briefly on proposed House Bill 6334 dealing with feasibility of regionalizing emergency dispatch functions, I submitted some written comments on that. And what I really reference with that is there was a study released last week by the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston that looked at regionalizing services, and they specifically looked at Connecticut and Massachusetts, and they looked at 9-1-1 centers.

And one of their conclusions, if we went from the current structure of a 109 separate systems to a county-based approach, we could save approximately 60 percent as a state. And so

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their study, I urge you to look at that not just for 9-1-1 but for beyond to other things. But I think if the idea is to look at the feasibility of regionalizing those services, that's a really good start right there. So with that I'll thank you and answer any questions you may have.

SENATOR CASSANO: Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA: Thank you. Just a question on the dog fee adoption and you may -- you may not know this answer but my understanding I thought was the Department of Agriculture has a voucher program in place.

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JOHN FILCHAK: They do.

REP. CANDELORA: Can't you as a municipality utilize that voucher program?

JOHN FILCHAK: As I understand it, we're not eligible, you know, as a -- as a municipal government. Individuals are, that's how it was constructed. And it's a great program and it does do a lot, but not everyone takes advantage of it. And we really -- preferred, of course, would be to send each animal out spayed or neutered.

REP. CANDELORA: Right. I thought we had changed the law last year to allow for the spay or neutering to be up front. I guess maybe that didn't move through the process. So we still have the current --

JOHN FILCHAK: There were bills, again, I think --

SENATOR CASSANO: It was passed and another that died the day of infamy.

JOHN FILCHAK: Okay. But the idea would be to adopt

them out in that condition.

REP. CANDELORA: Thank you. I appreciate that answer.

SENATOR CASSANO: We'll check that out and see what we can do on that. If it died and didn't come back, we'll resurrect it because it does make sense.

JOHN FILCHAK: Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO: Joshua.

JOSHUA GHIROLI: Good afternoon. My name is Josh Ghiroli, I am a disabled vet and a proud Pit Bull owner. And I have written a letter on behalf of my dog today, so I will go on and read it. I am writing this letter on behalf of my dog, Kobe, who became a part of my family six years ago. He unfortunately isn't able to stand up for himself, ironically, to consider how far he and other Pit Bulls will go to stand up for their owners. So I could I refuse to protect a member of my family that has been a friend a more often than not, a pillow to my seven year-old-son, Dominic, as a carry blanket for my wife making her feel safe during my multiple deployments, and a loyal companion and TV watching buddy to me.

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If Pit Bulls have one flaw, it's their eagerness to please their master, masters who sometimes take advantage of that loyalty by having their dogs fight other dogs. The problem with society is that all too often than not, society feels it should punish itself for the wrongdoing of a few. The same can be said about the punishment of an entire breed because of a few dogs. What's worse is it isn't even the dogs fault, it's their owners.

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If there's no objection, I would ask that this be placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 40, we are talking Calendar 265, Senate Bill Number 191, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PENALTY FOR CAUSING HARM TO A VULNERABLE USER OF A PUBLIC WAY, Favorable Report of the Committee on TRANSPORTATION.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

If that item might be passed temporarily and we will return to it shortly.

Madam President, if we might move to Calendar Page -- Calendar Page 16, Calendar 523, House Bill 6323.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 16, Calendar 523, House Bill Number 6323, AN ACT CONCERNING ADOPTION FEES FOR DOGS, Favorable Report of the Committee on PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO:

Yes, Madam President. Good evening.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, sir.

SENATOR CASSANO:

Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Favorable Committee Report and ask for favorable passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on acceptance and passage.

Will you remark, sir?

SENATOR CASSANO:

Yes.

This is a bill entitled An Act Concerning Adoption Fees for Dogs. There was an amendment in House, before it came here. The amendment maximizes the amount of fees that you would pay for a dog at \$150. There is a \$45 certificate generally provided, so that you can take to a vet -- veterinarian, but if you want to have the dog spayed and neutered and so on, it costs much more than that, so it capped at 150.

I would move adoption of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further on the bill?

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO:

Thank you, Madam President.

I want to thank Senator Cassano for his leadership on the P and D Committee. And a pleasure it was to work with him.

Madam President, with respect to this bill, my concern was always that by raising the fees, we are going to deter adoptions by the public. And that was a very big concern of mine. As I know it was of Senator Cassano and others, but as we explored the issue further, we came across that this is not going to deter the matter whatsoever.

That, in fact, this is going to be a healthier aspect towards the animals. It's going to help the towns. In the long run, it's a good thing to do. So I was hesitant in P and D and after being informed of the facts, as it turns out, my analysis was wrong. And the correct analysis is that we should do this bill, not only for the short term, but for the long term.

So I am very supportive of this bill. And once again it was a pleasure working with a true gentleman, like Senator Cassano.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO:

Seeing none, I would ask that it be placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing -- oh -- seeing an objection.

Mr. Clerk, will you please call a roll call vote and the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.
Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, will you call the roll call vote again please? Thank you.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Senators to the Chamber. Immediate roll call ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted, if all members have voted, the machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk will you call the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5836.

Total Number Voting	35
Necessary for Adoption	18
Those voting Yea	35
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

The bill passes.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 19, Calendar 556, House Bill Number 6311, AN ACT PROHIBITING THE MUNICIPALITIES FROM ADOPTING BREED SPECIFIC DOG ORDINANCES, Favorable Report of the Committee on PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Cassano.