

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1084**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Josh S. Cutler*

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to penalties for the improper treatment of animals.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Josh S. Cutler</i>	<i>6th Plymouth</i>
<i>Bruce J. Ayers</i>	<i>1st Norfolk</i>
<i>David F. DeCoste</i>	<i>5th Plymouth</i>
<i>Michelle M. DuBois</i>	<i>10th Plymouth</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1084**

By Mr. Cutler of Duxbury, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1084) of Josh S. Cutler and others relative to the improper treatment of animals. Municipalities and Regional Government.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court  
(2017-2018)**

An Act relative to penalties for the improper treatment of animals.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 140 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
2 inserting after section 141B the following new section:-

3 Section 141C.

4 (a) For the purposes of this section:

5 (1) "Animal" means a dog or cat under one (1) year of age.

6 (2) "Buyer" means a person who purchases an animal from a seller without the intent to  
7 resell the animal.

8 (3) "Seller" means an individual, or a partnership, association, corporation, or an officer  
9 or employee thereof that sells animals to the public.

10           (4) “Unfit for purchase” means any defect which is congenital or hereditary and which  
11 has a significant adverse effect on the health of the animal, or any disease, deformity, injury,  
12 physical condition, or any illness which has a significant adverse effect on the health of the  
13 animal and which was manifest, capable of diagnosis or likely to have been contracted on or  
14 before the sale and delivery of the animal to the buyer.

15           (b) No dog or cat less than 8 weeks of age shall be transferred by a person in the  
16 Commonwealth. Violation of this section shall result in a \$100 fine per offense.

17           (c) A veterinarian licensed in the Commonwealth may declare an animal unfit for  
18 purchase by providing a written statement that includes:

19           (1) The buyer’s name and address;

20           (2) The date the animal was examined;

21           (3) The breed, sex, and age of the animal;

22           (4) That the veterinarian examined the animal;

23           (5) That either:

24           (i) the animal has, had, or has died from a contagious or infectious disease or severe  
25 parasitism, that the veterinarian found the presence of symptoms of said disease or severe  
26 parasitism, and that said disease or severe parasitism is likely to have been contracted on or  
27 before the sale and delivery of the animal to the buyer; or

28 (ii) the animal has a congenital or hereditary condition that significantly and adversely  
29 impacts the health of the animal, requires hospitalization or a non-elective surgical procedure, or  
30 caused the death of the animal;

31 (6) The precise findings of the examination, diagnostic tests, and/or necropsy;

32 (7) The treatment recommended, if any, and an estimate or the actual cost of the  
33 treatment;

34 (8) That the examination occurred either:

35 (i) within 14 days of the transfer if the declaration of unfitness for purchase is based on  
36 an illness that existed in the animal on or before the sale and transfer of the animal;

37 (ii) within one year after the sale and transfer of the animal if the declaration of unfitness  
38 for purchase is based on a hereditary or congenital condition that has a significant adverse effect  
39 on the health of the animal; or

40 (iii) within one year after the sale and transfer of the animal if the breed, sex, or health of  
41 the animal was misrepresented at the time of the transfer;

42 (9) The veterinarian's name, address, telephone number and signature.

43 (d) An animal shall not be found unfit for purchase on account of:

44 (1) injuries sustained or illnesses likely to have been contracted subsequent to the date of  
45 sale and transfer;

46 (2) a health problem or hereditary or congenital condition that is separately disclosed by  
47 the seller verbally and in writing at the time of sale, provided that both the seller and the buyer  
48 sign such disclosure at the time of sale;

49 (3) a hereditary or congenital condition if the seller provides the buyer with written  
50 documentation at the time of sale and/or transfer establishing that prior to breeding, the animal's  
51 parents were screened for health issues according to breed-specific protocols and requirements  
52 established by the Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) or a comparable recognized animal  
53 health registry;

54 (4) veterinary findings of internal or external parasites unless the animal is clinically ill or  
55 dies due to the condition.

56 (e) If an animal is declared unfit for purchase under (c) above, the seller shall provide the  
57 buyer with any of the following remedies that the buyer elects:

58 (1) Return the animal to the seller for a refund of the purchase price, plus sales tax, and  
59 reimbursement for reasonable veterinary fees for diagnosing and treating the animal in an  
60 amount not to exceed the original purchase price of the animal, plus sales tax; or

61 (2) Exchange the animal for an animal of the buyer's choice of equivalent value,  
62 providing a replacement animal is available, and reimbursement for reasonable veterinary fees  
63 for diagnosing and treating the animal in an amount not to exceed the original purchase price of  
64 the animal, plus sales tax; or

65           (3) Retain the animal, and receive reimbursement for reasonable veterinary fees for  
66 diagnosis and treating the animal in an amount not to exceed 150 percent of the original purchase  
67 price of the animal, plus sales tax on the original purchase price of the animal.

68           (4) If the animal has died as the result of a condition resulting in a declaration of  
69 unfitness for purchase under subsection (c), obtain reasonable veterinary fees for diagnosing,  
70 treating and disposing of the animal in an amount not to exceed the original purchase price of the  
71 animal, plus sales tax, and either a refund for the purchase price of the animal, plus sales tax, or a  
72 replacement animal of equivalent value of the buyer's choice.

73           (5) Nothing in this subsection shall require a seller to provide a buyer with a replacement  
74 animal.

75           (f) If a seller wishes to contest a demand for veterinary expenses, refund, or exchange  
76 made by a buyer under this section, the seller may require the buyer to produce the animal for  
77 examination within ten days by a second licensed veterinarian designated by the seller, at the  
78 seller's expense. If the animal is deceased, the seller may choose to have the second veterinarian  
79 review any records provided by the buyer's veterinarian, including the necropsy report. If the  
80 buyer and the seller are unable to reach an agreement that constitutes one of the options set forth  
81 in subsection (e) within 10 business days following receipt of the animal for such examination,  
82 the buyer may initiate an action in a court of competent jurisdiction to recover or obtain  
83 reimbursement of veterinary expenses, refund, or exchange.

84           (g) Unless the seller contests a reimbursement under section (e) of this section,  
85 reimbursement shall be made to the buyer no later than 10 days after the seller receives the  
86 veterinarian's statement that the animal was unfit for purchase.

87 (h) This section does not in any way limit the rights or remedies that are otherwise  
88 available to a buyer under any other law.

89 (i) This section shall not apply to shelters or non-profit organizations that house or adopt  
90 animals for the purpose of protecting them from cruelty, neglect, abuse or homelessness, to  
91 municipal animal control facilities or to other facilities when adopting a stray animal as part of a  
92 contract with a municipality for animal control services.

93 SECTION 2. Said chapter 140 is hereby further amended by striking section 137C and  
94 replacing with the following:

95 Section 137C. The mayor of a city, the selectmen of a town, the police commissioner in  
96 the city of Boston, a chief of police or an animal control officer may inspect a kennel or cattery  
97 or cause the inspection of a kennel or cattery. Refusal of such entry and inspection shall be  
98 grounds for denial, suspension, or revocation of a person's license to operate a kennel or cattery.  
99 Inspections of kennels or catteries regulated under section 174F of this chapter may also take  
100 place by the commissioner and must take place between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.  
101 unless an alternate time is mutually agreed upon by the inspector and the licensee. The licensee  
102 or their authorized agent shall be present during the inspection, and the licensee shall be given a  
103 reasonable notice prior to the inspection; however, if deemed necessary to adequately perform  
104 the inspection, the Commissioner or other authorized inspector may determine it is appropriate to  
105 not provide advance notice to the licensee before arriving at the facility. If a kennel or cattery  
106 regulated under section 174F is located at a private residence, only the areas of the residence that  
107 are used for kennel or cattery purposes or for the maintenance of kennel or cattery records shall  
108 be required to be available for inspection. If, in the judgment of the authorized inspector, any

109 kennel or cattery is not being maintained in a sanitary and humane manner or if records are not  
110 properly kept as required by law and in compliance with rules established by the department  
111 under section 174F of this chapter, such person or body shall, by order, issue the licensee a  
112 written citation or notice explaining the noncompliant issue or issues and requiring the licensee  
113 to come into compliance within a reasonable specified time frame, or summarily revoke or  
114 suspend the license for the kennel or cattery, depending on the severity of the offense. If the  
115 licensee fails to come into compliance within the time period specified by the inspector, such  
116 person or body shall, by order revoke the license for the kennel or cattery. Upon the petition of  
117 25 citizens, filed with the mayor of a city, the selectmen of a town or the police commissioner in  
118 the city of Boston setting forth a statement that such citizens are aggrieved or annoyed to an  
119 unreasonable extent by a dog maintained in such city or town due to excessive barking or other  
120 conditions connected with a kennel or cattery constituting a nuisance, the mayor, selectmen or  
121 police commissioner, as the case may be, shall, within 7 days after the filing of the petition, give  
122 notice to all parties in interest of a public hearing to be held within 14 days after the date of such  
123 notice. The mayor, selectmen or police commissioner shall, within 7 days after the public  
124 hearing, investigate or cause to be investigated the subject matter of the petition and shall, by  
125 order, either suspend or revoke the kennel or cattery license, otherwise regulate the kennel or  
126 cattery or dismiss the petition. Any written notice of an order revoking or suspending the license,  
127 regulating the kennel or cattery or dismissing the petition shall be mailed immediately to the  
128 officer issuing the license and to the holder of the license. Within 10 days after the order, the  
129 holder of the license may bring a petition in the district court within the judicial district in which  
130 the kennel or cattery is maintained, addressed to the justice of the court, praying that the order be  
131 reviewed by the court. After notice to all parties as the court may consider necessary, the court

132 shall review the action, hear the witnesses and affirm the order unless it shall appear that it was  
133 made without proper cause or in bad faith, in which case the order shall be reversed. The  
134 decision of the court shall be final and conclusive upon the parties. A person maintaining a  
135 kennel or cattery after the license to maintain a kennel or cattery has been so revoked, or while  
136 such a license is suspended, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$250.

137 SECTION 3. Said chapter 140 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 174E  
138 the following new section:-

139 Section 174F. The department shall make rules and regulations for commercial breeder  
140 kennels or catteries and personal kennels or catteries where persons keep at least 10 sexually  
141 intact female dogs or cats between 1 and 8 years of age for the purpose of breeding such dogs or  
142 cats and selling the offspring as household pets. The rules and regulations shall ensure that the  
143 animals have proper housing, nutrition, hydration, behavioral requirements, grooming, staffing,  
144 handling, health and veterinary care, waste disposal, and other general standards of care. In  
145 developing rules and regulations in accordance with this section, the department shall consider  
146 corresponding standards in the American Veterinary Medical Association's Regulations to  
147 Assure Appropriate Care For Animals Intended For Use As Pets (AVMA Pet Care Standards), as  
148 published on April 9, 2010.

149 SECTION 4: Said chapter 140 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 39F  
150 the following section:

151 Section 39G.

152 (a) No pet shop shall purchase a dog or cat for resale or sell or offer for sale any dog or  
153 cat that originated at, or was purchased from, any breeder, person, firm or corporation that is  
154 required by law to be licensed by the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. §2131 et seq.) that:

155 (1) is not in possession of a current license issued by the United States Department of  
156 Agriculture and any applicable state agency,

157 (2) was found to have committed a direct violation of the federal Animal Welfare Act  
158 during the two year period prior to such purchase,

159 (3) was found to have committed three or more indirect violations of the federal Animal  
160 Welfare Act during the two year period prior to such purchase provided such violations pertained  
161 to the health or welfare of an animal and were not administrative in nature, or

162 (4) is cited on the two most recent United States Department of Agriculture inspection  
163 reports prior to the purchase of the animal by the pet shop for no-access violations pursuant to  
164 enforcement of the federal Animal Welfare Act.

165 (b) No pet shop shall purchase a dog or cat for resale or sell or offer for sale any dog or  
166 cat that originated at, or was purchased from, any breeder, person, firm or corporation not in  
167 compliance with the requirements for commercial breeder kennels or catteries or personal  
168 kennels or catteries under section 174E of this chapter at the time of purchase of the animal by  
169 the pet shop.

170 (c) No pet shop shall purchase a dog or cat for resale or sell or offer for sale any dog or  
171 cat that originated at, or was purchased from, any breeder, person, firm or corporation that

172 directly or indirectly obtained such dog or cat from a breeder, person, firm or corporation  
173 described in (a) or (b) of this section.

174 (d) A pet shop shall maintain records verifying compliance with this section for a  
175 minimum of two years after disposition of the dog or cat.

176 (e) Nothing in this section shall prevent a pet shop from acquiring a dog or cat for resale  
177 or from selling or offering for sale a dog or cat obtained from a shelter as defined in section  
178 136A of this chapter.

179 (f) Any locality may adopt an ordinance that is more stringent than the provisions set  
180 forth in this section.

181 (g) This section shall become effective one year after enactment.