

HB2290 - Rep. Howitt, Steven (R) - An Act changing the legal status of "pets" from personal property to "companion animals"

For the purposes of this bill a "companion animal" shall be considered a dog, cat or any domesticated animal. Domesticated animal for purposes of this bill shall include birds, rabbits, hamsters, ferrets, or any animal sharing a home with a caregiver.

Caregivers of "companion animals" shall be considered "guardians".

Guardians of "companion animals" have a duty to protect the health and safety of the animal. A companion animal may not be left outside during extreme weather including extreme heat, cold, wind, rain, or hail or any weather condition which poses an adverse risk to the health and safety of the "companion animal".

Guardians and/or any person who abuses a "companion animal" shall have the animal seized by animal control and shall be punished by:

First offense - imprisonment in the house of correction for a period of 6 months, but not longer than 2 ½ years and a \$2,500 fine, "companion animal" abusers may not be permitted to obtain another animal.

Second offense – imprisonment in the house of correction for a period of 1 year but not longer than 2 ½ years and a \$5,000 fine and shall be put on a "do not adopt to" list. This list will be published publicly. the list will be provided to all shelters, rescues, animal controls offices and pet stores.

Third offense – imprisonment in the house of correction for a period of 2 ½ years and a \$10,000 fine and shall be put on a "do not adopt to" list. This list will be published publicly. the list will be provided to all shelters, rescues, animal controls offices and pet stores.