



SB 356 Summary: Animal Care

Senate Bill 356 helps counties, municipalities and Georgia taxpayers reduce the significant costs of providing emergency medical care, rehabilitation, and shelter for abused and neglected animals that are recovered by our workers from cruelty cases such as hoarding and dog fighting.

The legislation gives the prosecutor, the local government, or the government agency that recovered the animal the option to file a petition in civil court to request a bond payment from the owner of the animal sufficient to pay the costs of emergency medical care, rehabilitation, food and shelter. If a petition is filed, the owner of the animal can challenge the petition and the bond amount and is entitled to a hearing.

More than 34 states, including North Carolina, Mississippi, Florida and Virginia, have passed similar laws to create an option for local governments to block dogfighters and hoarders from using taxpayer dollars to rehabilitate and support their animals.

The Georgia bill is modeled after these and other successful approaches. It shifts the accountability and the financial burden of caring for animals from taxpayers to the owner of the animal, which in turn will help counties to more responsibly manage limited local revenues and resources.