

By Senator Steube

23-01207-18

20181576__

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to lost or stray dogs or cats;
3 creating s. 823.151, F.S.; providing legislative
4 findings; requiring specified entities that take
5 receivership of lost or stray dogs or cats to adopt
6 written policies and procedures to ensure that every
7 reasonable effort is made to quickly and reliably
8 return owned animals to their owners; providing
9 requirements for such policies and procedures;
10 requiring that specified records be made available to
11 the public; providing an effective date.

12
13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

14
15 Section 1. Section 823.151, Florida Statutes, is created to
16 read:

17 823.151 Lost or stray dogs and cats.—

18 (1) The Legislature finds that natural disasters, such as
19 hurricanes, may result in an increase in owned dogs and cats
20 becoming lost or stray. The Legislature further finds that dog
21 and cat owners statewide should be afforded the opportunity to
22 quickly and reliably claim their lost pets. It is therefore
23 declared to be the public policy of the state that animal
24 control agencies and humane organizations shall adopt policies
25 and procedures to help return lost cats or dogs to identified
26 owners.

27 (2) (a) A public or private animal shelter, humane
28 organization, or animal control agency operated by a humane
29 organization or by a county, municipality, or other incorporated

23-01207-18

20181576__

30 political subdivision that takes receivership of any lost or
31 stray dogs or cats shall adopt written policies and procedures
32 to ensure that every reasonable effort is made to quickly and
33 reliably return owned animals to their owners. Such policies and
34 procedures shall include:

35 1. Upon intake, screening of lost or stray dogs and cats
36 for identification, including tags, licenses, implanted
37 microchips, and tattoos.

38 2. A process for matching received lost or stray dogs and
39 cats with any reports of lost pets received by the shelter from
40 owners.

41 3. Public notice of lost or stray dogs and cats received,
42 provided at the shelter or on the Internet, as appropriate,
43 within 48 hours of the animal's admission.

44 4. Reasonable efforts to notify identified owners of lost
45 or stray dogs and cats within 48 hours of identification. Such
46 reasonable efforts may include, but are not limited to, attempts
47 to contact identified owners by telephone, by electronic mail,
48 by United States mail, or by personal service at the owner's
49 last known phone number and address.

50 5. Notice to the public of the shelter's location, hours,
51 fees, and the return-to-owner process posted on the Internet,
52 with the shelter's business hours posted outside the shelter
53 facility and recorded on the shelter's telephone answering
54 system message.

55 6. Access for owners to retrieve dogs and cats at least 1
56 weekend day per week and after 5:00 p.m. 1 weekday per week,
57 provided that complying with the requirements of this
58 subparagraph does not require an increase in total operating

23-01207-18

20181576__

59 hours.

60 7. Direct return-to-owner protocols that allow animal
61 control officers in the field to directly return lost or stray
62 dogs and cats to their owners when the owners have been
63 identified.

64 8. Procedural safeguards to minimize the euthanasia of
65 owned dogs and cats. Such safeguards shall include, but are not
66 limited to, record verification to ensure that each animal to be
67 euthanized is the correct animal designated for the procedure
68 and proper scanning for an implanted microchip using a universal
69 scanner immediately prior to the procedure.

70 9. Temporary extension of local minimum stray hold periods
71 after a disaster is declared by the President of the United
72 States or a state of emergency is declared by the Governor, if
73 deemed necessary by a local government in the area of the
74 declaration.

75 (b) Records related to this section and maintained by a
76 public or private animal shelter, humane organization, or animal
77 control agency operated by a humane society or by a county,
78 municipality, or other incorporated political subdivision must
79 be made available to the public pursuant to chapter 119.

80 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.