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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to domestic animals; amending s.
3 828.12, F.S.; requiring the Department of Law
4 Enforcement to post on its website specified
5 information relating to each individual convicted of
6 specified animal cruelty offenses; requiring the clerk
7 of each court and county detention facility to provide
8 the Department of Law Enforcement with such
9 information; amending s. 828.29, F.S.; extending the
10 timeframe for which a consumer may pursue remedies for
11 the sale of an animal certifiably unfit for purchase;
12 revising such remedies; requiring that all financing
13 terms be disclosed to the consumer by the pet dealer
14 before the sale of the animal; deleting certain
15 provisions relating to a consumer's waiver
16 relinquishing his or her rights to return an animal;
17 requiring a pet dealer to provide copies of specified
18 medical records to a consumer; denying a consumer the
19 right to a refund or an exchange for a pet sale under
20 certain circumstances; extending the timeframe within
21 which a consumer must notify the pet dealer of a
22 veterinarian's determination that the animal is unfit;
23 authorizing the consumer to initiate an action in
24 certain courts for any contestation of veterinary
25 expenses or demands of the pet dealer for a refund or
26 exchange; providing for the award of punitive damages;
27 revising requirements for a required notice to a
28 consumer; revising the text of the required notice;
29 revising the definition of the term "pet dealer";

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30 requiring a pet dealer to retain a copy of a specified
31 notice for a specified period; providing that
32 violations constitute an unfair method of competition
33 or an unfair or deceptive act or practice in violation
34 of specified provisions and subject to penalties;
35 creating s. 828.291, F.S.; providing a legislative
36 purpose; providing construction; requiring the
37 Department of Business and Professional Regulation to
38 develop a list of best management practices for
39 adoption and implementation; specifying requirements
40 for such best management practices; requiring the
41 department to post guidance on its website related to
42 the selection of breeders and the purchase of an
43 animal; requiring the department to post information
44 on its website relating to animal cruelty; providing
45 requirements for such information; providing an
46 effective date.

47
48 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

49
50 Section 1. Subsection (7) of section 828.12, Florida
51 Statutes, is amended, and subsection (8) is added to that
52 section, to read:

53 828.12 Cruelty to animals.—

54 (7) By Beginning January 1, 2027 ~~2026~~, the Department of
55 Law Enforcement shall post on its website, in a searchable
56 format prescribed by the department, the names and any aliases,
57 the date of birth, the race, the counties of conviction, the
58 charges, the case numbers, the dispositions, the description of

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59 any identifying marks and tattoos, and a photograph taken at the
60 time of booking related to the animal cruelty offense of each
61 individual ~~those individuals~~ who has ~~have~~ been convicted of, or
62 who has ~~have~~ entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to,
63 regardless of adjudication, a violation of this section.

64 (8) Each clerk of court and county detention facility must
65 provide the Department of Law Enforcement with the information,
66 data, and images required in subsection (7).

67 Section 2. Subsections (5) through (8), (10), (12), (13),
68 and (17) of section 828.29, Florida Statutes, are amended, and
69 subsections (18) and (19) are added to that section, to read:

70 828.29 Dogs and cats transported or offered for sale;
71 health requirements; consumer guarantee; disclosures.—

72 (5) If, within 30 ~~14~~ days after ~~following~~ the sale by a pet
73 dealer of an animal subject to this section, a licensed
74 veterinarian of the consumer's choosing certifies that, at the
75 time of the sale, the animal was unfit for purchase due to
76 illness or disease, the presence of symptoms of a contagious or
77 infectious disease, or the presence of internal or external
78 parasites, excluding fleas and ticks; or if, within 1 year after
79 ~~following~~ the sale of an animal subject to this section, a
80 licensed veterinarian of the consumer's choosing certifies such
81 animal to be unfit for purchase due to a congenital or
82 hereditary disorder which adversely affects the health of the
83 animal; or if, within 1 year after ~~following~~ the sale of an
84 animal subject to this section, the breed, sex, or health of
85 such animal is found to have been misrepresented to the
86 consumer, the pet dealer shall afford the consumer the right to
87 choose one of the following options:

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88 (a) The right to return the animal and receive a refund of
89 the purchase price, including any interest accrued and ~~the sales~~
90 tax or fees paid or due from the purchaser, and reimbursement
91 for reasonable veterinary costs directly related to the
92 veterinarian's examination and certification that the animal ~~dog~~
93 ~~or cat~~ is unfit for purchase pursuant to this section or ~~and~~
94 directly related to necessary emergency services and treatment
95 undertaken to relieve the suffering of such animal. If the
96 consumer financed the animal pursuant to a financing agreement
97 with the pet dealer, the pet dealer must ensure that the
98 financing agreement is terminated without penalty to the
99 consumer;

100 (b) The right to return the animal and receive an exchange
101 animal ~~dog or cat~~ of the consumer's choice of equivalent value,
102 and reimbursement for reasonable veterinary costs directly
103 related to the veterinarian's examination and certification that
104 the animal ~~dog or cat~~ is unfit for purchase pursuant to this
105 section or ~~and~~ directly related to necessary emergency services
106 and treatment undertaken to relieve the suffering of such
107 animal; or

108 (c) The right to retain the animal and receive
109 reimbursement for reasonable veterinary costs for necessary
110 services and treatment related to the attempt to cure or curing
111 of the animal, or necessary emergency services or treatment
112 undertaken to relieve the suffering of such animal received
113 within 1 year after purchase ~~dog or cat.~~

114
115 ~~Reimbursement for veterinary costs may not exceed the purchase~~
116 ~~price of the animal.~~ The cost of veterinary services is

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117 reasonable if comparable to the cost of similar services
118 rendered by other licensed veterinarians in proximity to the
119 treating veterinarian and the services rendered are appropriate
120 for the certification by the veterinarian.

121 (6) All financing terms must be disclosed by the pet dealer
122 to the consumer before the sale of the animal ~~A consumer may~~
123 ~~sign a waiver relinquishing his or her right to return the dog~~
124 ~~or cat for congenital or hereditary disorders. In the case of~~
125 ~~such waiver, the consumer has 48 normal business hours,~~
126 ~~excluding weekends and holidays, in which to have the animal~~
127 ~~examined by a licensed veterinarian of the consumer's choosing.~~
128 ~~If the veterinarian certifies that, at the time of sale, the dog~~
129 ~~or cat was unfit for purchase due to a congenital or hereditary~~
130 ~~disorder, the pet dealer must afford the consumer the right to~~
131 ~~choose one of the following options:~~

132 ~~(a) The right to return the animal and receive a refund of~~
133 ~~the purchase price, including sales tax, but excluding the~~
134 ~~veterinary costs related to the certification that the dog or~~
135 ~~cat is unfit; or~~

136 ~~(b) The right to return the animal and receive an exchange~~
137 ~~dog or cat of the consumer's choice of equivalent value, but not~~
138 ~~a refund of the veterinary costs related to the certification~~
139 ~~that the dog or cat is unfit.~~

140 (7) Before the sale of an animal, a pet dealer must provide
141 to the consumer copies of records of all medical examinations or
142 tests that were conducted on the animal or any medication given
143 before the purchase of the animal. A pet dealer may specifically
144 state at the time of sale, in writing to the consumer, the
145 presence of specific congenital or hereditary disorders, in

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146 which case the consumer has no right to any refund or exchange
147 for those identified disorders, if such consumer signs a
148 notification that indicates that the animal has been examined by
149 a veterinarian who determined that the animal has the identified
150 congenital or hereditary disorder.

151 (8) The refund or exchange required by subsection (5) must
152 ~~or subsection (6) shall~~ be made by the pet dealer not later than
153 10 business days after ~~following~~ receipt of a signed veterinary
154 certification as required in subsection (5) ~~or subsection (6)~~.
155 The consumer must notify the pet dealer within 7 ~~2~~ business days
156 after receipt of the veterinarian's determination that the
157 animal is unfit. The written certification of unfitness must be
158 presented to the pet dealer not later than 3 business days
159 following receipt thereof by the consumer.

160 (10) If a pet dealer wishes to contest a demand for
161 veterinary expenses, refund, or exchange made by a consumer
162 under this section, the dealer may require the consumer to
163 produce the animal for examination by a licensed veterinarian
164 designated by the dealer. Upon such examination, if the consumer
165 and the dealer are unable to reach an agreement that constitutes
166 one of the options set forth in subsection (5) ~~or subsection (6)~~
167 within 10 business days after ~~following~~ receipt of the animal
168 for such examination, the consumer may initiate an action in a
169 court of competent jurisdiction, or the county court small
170 claims court division, in the county where the animal owner
171 resides, to recover or obtain reimbursement of veterinary
172 expenses and a ~~refund, or exchange,~~ as set forth in subsection
173 (5), and may collect punitive damages in an amount not less than
174 \$2,500 at the discretion of the court.

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175 (12) Every pet dealer who sells an animal to a consumer
176 must provide the consumer at the time of sale with a printed,
177 written notice in 14-point boldface type to be signed by the
178 consumer, ~~printed or typed,~~ which is separate from the contract
179 and reads as follows:

180
181 RIGHT TO CANCEL

182 Florida consumers have certain rights under section
183 828.29, Florida Statutes. You have the right to: 1)
184 return the animal; 2) exchange the animal; and 3)
185 receive reimbursement for certain veterinary expenses
186 under certain circumstances. Please have your new pet
187 seen by a veterinarian immediately. A copy of this law
188 is attached to this notice.

189
190 It is the consumer's right, pursuant to section
191 828.29, Florida Statutes, to receive a certificate of
192 veterinary inspection with each animal ~~dog or cat~~
193 purchased from a pet dealer. Such certificate shall
194 list all vaccines and deworming medications
195 administered to the animal and list any medical
196 diagnosis and treatments ~~and shall state that the~~
197 ~~animal has been examined by a Florida-licensed~~
198 ~~veterinarian who certifies that, to the best of the~~
199 ~~veterinarian's knowledge, the animal was found to have~~
200 ~~been healthy at the time of the veterinary~~
201 ~~examination.~~ In the event that the consumer purchases
202 the animal and finds it to have been unfit for
203 purchase as provided in section 828.29(5), Florida

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204 Statutes, the consumer must notify the pet dealer
205 within 7 ~~2~~ business days after ~~of~~ the veterinarian's
206 determination that the animal was unfit. The consumer
207 has the right to retain, return, or exchange the
208 animal and receive reimbursement for certain related
209 veterinary services rendered to the animal, subject to
210 the right of the dealer to have the animal examined by
211 another veterinarian.

212
213 ...(Signature of Animal owner or Lessee, or Owner's or
214 Lessee's Authorized Person)...

215
216 (13) For the purposes of this section ~~subsections (5)-(12)~~
217 ~~and (16)~~, the term "pet dealer" means any person, firm,
218 partnership, corporation, or other association which, in the
219 ordinary course of business, engages in the sale of more than
220 three ~~two~~ litters, or 30 ~~20~~ dogs or cats, per year, whichever is
221 greater, to the public. This definition includes breeders of
222 animals who sell such animals directly to a consumer. This
223 definition does not include not-for-profit entities that do not
224 purchase dogs or cats from a breeder or broker.

225 (17) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, a person
226 who violates ~~any provision of~~ this section commits a misdemeanor
227 of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s.
228 775.083.

229 (18) Any record provided to a consumer pursuant to the sale
230 of an animal under this section must be maintained by the pet
231 dealer for a period of at least 7 years after the sale.

232 (19) A pet dealer who violates this section commits an

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233 unfair method of competition or an unfair or deceptive act or
234 practice in violation of part II of chapter 501 and is subject
235 to the penalties and remedies provided for such violations.

236 Section 3. Section 828.291, Florida Statutes, is created to
237 read:

238 828.291 Best management practices for dog breeding.—

239 (1) The purpose of this section is to allow voluntary
240 participation in best management practices relating to minimum
241 standards of care, facility operations, and breeding practices
242 for individuals or entities engaged in the breeding of dogs in
243 order to protect animal welfare, promote responsible breeding,
244 and ensure the health and safety of animals and consumers.

245 (2) This section may not be construed to prohibit a local
246 jurisdiction from implementing requirements for individuals or
247 entities engaged in the breeding of dogs.

248 (3) The Department of Business and Professional Regulation
249 shall develop a list of best management practices that
250 individuals or entities engaged in the breeding of dogs may
251 voluntarily adopt and implement. Such best management practices
252 must include minimum standards of care, facility operations, and
253 breeding practices for individuals or entities engaged in the
254 breeding of dogs, including, but not limited to, standards
255 relating to all of the following:

256 (a) Breeding.

257 (b) Feeding.

258 (c) Housing.

259 (d) Health.

260 (e) Enrichment.

261 (f) Selling and transferring, in accordance with s. 828.29.

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262 (g) Recordkeeping, in accordance with s. 828.29.

263 (4) The Department of Business and Professional Regulation
264 shall post on its website guidance for the public about how to
265 identify the breeders that are following best management
266 practices and provide a checklist to use when purchasing an
267 animal.

268 (5) The Department of Business and Professional Regulation
269 shall post on its website information regarding animal cruelty,
270 including a description of conduct constituting animal cruelty
271 under ss. 828.12 and 828.13, the penalties for such conduct, and
272 instructions for reporting suspected animal cruelty or abuse to
273 the appropriate local authorities, including the contact
274 information for at least one appropriate authority for each
275 county in the state.

276 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.