

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY**

BILL NO. H1914

TITLE: An Act relative to a temporary possession ban of animals for animal abusers

SPONSOR: Rep. Tram Nguyen

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HEARING DATE: July 29, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY: H1703 (2023-2024)
H1824 (2021-2022)

SENATE BILL: S1207 (Moore)

REPORTING DEADLINE: September 27, 2025 (subject extensions, in accordance with House Rule 27)

CURRENT LAW: Section 35WW of Chapter 10 of the General Laws establishes the Homeless Animal Prevention and Care Fund. It is funded by revenues received by the commonwealth pursuant to the voluntary check-off donation indicated on the department of revenue's annual income tax return and from public and private sources as gifts, grants and donations to further reduce the population of homeless animals.

Section 37 of Chapter 129 permits the commissioner of agriculture to levy fines for incursions against animals under Chapter 129 up to \$500 per animal harmed with a maximum to \$10,000 per action.

Section 77 of Chapter 272 of the General Laws defines and criminalizes cruelty to animals and the over fifty ways in which cruelty can be established. This carries a punishment of a \$5,000 fine or two and a half years imprisonment in a house of correction for the first offense. Subsequent offenses are punished by up to a \$10,000 fine and/or ten years imprisonment.

Section 77C of Chapter 272 of the General Laws criminalizes sexual contact with animals or promoting it in any way. A conviction is punished with 7 years in a state prison, two and a half years in a jail or house of correction and/or a fine of up to \$5,000.

BILL SUMMARY:

Section 1 – Adds the ability for the fund in Section 35WW to for animal control officers to be trained when recognizing illegal caging and chaining of animals.

Section 2 – Adds the funds collected from fines from Section 37 to the sources of funds for the Homeless Animal Prevention and Care Fund in Section 35WW.

Section 3 – Directs funds from fines collected under Section 37 to be deposited into the Homeless Animal Prevention and Care Fund from Section 35WW.

Section 4 – Strips people convicted under Section 77C from owning animals consistent with the section added by Section 5 of this bill.

Section 5 – Adds Section 77 1/2 to Chapter 272. Permits the court to prevent people convicted of animal abuse under Section 272 from owning animals for any length of time the court deems appropriate for the protection of animals. The court must notify the relevant authorities of the duration and conditions of the prohibition within 30 days. A person prohibited from owning or accessing animals may petition the court to reduce the duration or conditions of the prohibition once per year. Anyone who violates the court order shall forfeit custody of any animal owned, possessed, or kept by the offender to the custody of an entity incorporated under the laws of the commonwealth for the prevention of cruelty to animals or for the care and protection of homeless or suffering animals.