

Massachusetts House of Representatives

Bill Summary

Bill #: H.2253

Title: An Act relative to updating animal health inspections.

Sponsor: Rep. Daniel Cahill

Committee: Municipalities and Regional Government

Hearing Date:

Similar bills: S.1458 (Sen. Montigny) nearly identical except for MGL session reference (2022 versus 2016)

Prior History: Similar to S.1311 (2023-2024) placed in study order.

Current Law: MGL Chapter 129, Section 39A governs the licensing of pet shops and animal health inspections in such establishments. Persons operating pet shops must obtain a license from the director of animal health at the Department of Agricultural Resources. The director, subject to approval by the Governor, may issue rules and regulations concerning licensure requirements and the conduct of the licensed businesses, maintenance of the premises, buildings and conveyances and the care and treatment of birds, mammals or reptiles. It also allows for the regulation of the method and timing of inspections to check on the welfare of such animals.

The second paragraph exempts from this section zoos, public animal pounds, horse or cattle auctions, institutions where animals are used for scientific research (referencing Chapter 49A, which has been repealed) and persons selling, exchanging or transferring the offspring of their personally owned animals.

Chapter 140, Section 136A defines a research institution as follows:

"Research institution", an institution operated by the United States, the commonwealth or a political subdivision thereof, a school or college of medicine, public health, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine or agriculture, a medical diagnostic laboratory, a biomedical corporation, or biological laboratory or a hospital or other educational or scientific establishment within the commonwealth above the rank of secondary school which, in connection with any of the activities thereof, investigates or provides instruction relative to the structure or function of living organisms or to the cause, prevention, control or cure of diseases or abnormal conditions of human beings or animals.

Summary: By eliminating two exemptions in the existing statute, this legislation would effectively require public animal pounds and persons selling, exchanging or otherwise transferring the offspring of their personally-owned animals to obtain a license from the state and be subject to periodic inspections.