

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 26-112—sSB 318
Environment Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING ANIMAL WELFARE

SUMMARY: This act expands the state veterinarian's authority to issue orders for preventing disease spread among animals and poultry by allowing her to issue them for any disease, rather than just for those that are contagious and infectious. It correspondingly allows her to protect the public from this broader category of disease.

The act also requires the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) commissioner to (1) study how the need for companion animal placement affects domestic violence victims and (2) create a working group to study the state's animal population control program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026, except the working group provision is effective upon passage.

COMPANION ANIMAL PLACEMENT STUDY

The act requires the DoAg commissioner, in consultation with the Office of Victim Services, to study how the need for companion animal placement affects domestic violence victims and submit a report on the study and any recommendations to the Environment Committee by January 1, 2027.

Under the act, the study must:

1. include resources currently available for domestic violence victims to find temporary or permanent placements;
2. identify at least one contact person for victims in Connecticut who need to place their companion animal in another person's care due to a domestic violence situation; and
3. examine the feasibility of establishing a phone number or other electronic communications line accessible 24 hours a day for victims who need to place their companion animal in another person's care.

ANIMAL POPULATION CONTROL PROGRAM WORKING GROUP

The act requires the DoAg commissioner, by July 1, 2026, to create a working group to study the state's animal population control program, which funds spaying or neutering for dogs and cats. The group must make recommendations about the program, including ways to increase and stabilize its funding, and the commissioner must submit them to the Environment Committee by January 1, 2027.

The working group's members include the following:

1. the DoAg commissioner or his designee;
2. the Connecticut Humane Society's executive director or his designee;

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

3. an animal welfare organization representative, appointed by the commissioner;
4. a Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association representative;
5. an animal control officers' organization representative; and
6. any other members the commissioner determines are needed.