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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 858 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY JONES, FREEMAN, KNOWLES, NEILSON, DRISCOLL,  
ZIMMERMAN, CIRESI AND CONKLIN, MARCH 10, 2021

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS,  
MARCH 10, 2021

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AN ACT

1 Amending the act of December 7, 1982 (P.L.784, No.225), entitled  
2 "An act relating to dogs, regulating the keeping of dogs;  
3 providing for the licensing of dogs and kennels; providing  
4 for the protection of dogs and the detention and destruction  
5 of dogs in certain cases; regulating the sale and  
6 transportation of dogs; declaring dogs to be personal  
7 property and the subject of theft; providing for the  
8 abandonment of animals; providing for the assessment of  
9 damages done to animals; providing for payment of damages by  
10 the Commonwealth in certain cases and the liability of the  
11 owner or keeper of dogs for such damages; imposing powers and  
12 duties on certain State and local officers and employees;  
13 providing penalties; and creating a Dog Law Restricted  
14 Account," in licenses, tags and kennels, further providing  
15 for transfer of dog licenses or tags and other licensing  
16 requirements and for service dogs and dogs used by municipal  
17 or State Police departments.

18 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
19 hereby enacts as follows:

20 Section 1. Sections 205 and 217(a) of the act of December 7,  
21 1982 (P.L.784, No.225), known as the Dog Law, are amended to  
22 read:

23 Section 205. Transfer of dog licenses or tags; other licensing  
24 requirements.

25 (a) Transfer of dog license.--It is unlawful to transfer a

1 dog license or dog license tag issued for one dog to another  
2 dog, except as otherwise provided in this act. The following  
3 apply:

4 (1) Whenever the ownership or possession of [any] a dog  
5 is permanently transferred from one person to another within  
6 the same county, the license of [such] the dog may be  
7 likewise transferred, upon application to an agent authorized  
8 under section 200(a) [. Such application], including a county  
9 treasurer.

10 (2) An application under this section shall be  
11 accompanied by a bill of sale or an affidavit from the owner  
12 that ownership of the dog is to be transferred. The owner  
13 shall provide the owner's name, address, telephone number and  
14 other relevant contact information.

15 (3) A new dog license, or the transfer of a dog license  
16 already secured, is not required when the possession of a dog  
17 is temporarily transferred for the purpose of hunting game,  
18 or for breeding, boarding and training, trial or show, in  
19 this Commonwealth. The issuing agent shall charge and retain  
20 \$1 for [such] the transfer application.

21 (b) Dog moved to another county.--Whenever [any] a dog  
22 licensed in one county is permanently moved to another county,  
23 an issuing agent of the county where the dog license was issued  
24 shall, upon the application of the owner or keeper of [such] the  
25 dog, certify [such] the dog license to an agent of the county to  
26 which the dog is moved. [Such] After payment of a fee of \$1, the  
27 agent shall [thereupon, and upon the payment of a fee of \$1 for  
28 the use of the agent,] issue a dog license and tag for [such]  
29 the dog in the county to which it is moved.

30 (c) Owners of unlicensed dogs.--[Any] A person other than as

1 exempt in section 206, becoming the owner of [any] a dog three  
2 months old or older, which has not already been licensed shall  
3 [forthwith] apply for and secure a license for [such] the dog  
4 under the provisions of this act.

5 Section 217. Service dogs and dogs used by municipal or State  
6 Police departments.

7 (a) Fee exemptions.--

8 (1) The provisions of this act relating to the payment  
9 of fees and other charges shall not apply to [any person who  
10 uses a service dog for aid or any municipal or State Police  
11 department or agency using a dog in the performance of the  
12 functions or duties of such department or agency. License  
13 tags for service dogs and dogs used by any municipal or State  
14 agency in the performance of the functions or duties of such  
15 department or agency shall be issued without charge.]:

16 (i) A person who uses a service dog for aid.

17 (ii) A municipal or State Police department or  
18 police agency using a dog in the performance of the  
19 functions or duties of the department or agency.

20 (iii) A service dog used in the performance of  
21 services by a police department, fire department or  
22 sheriff's office or in the performance of rescue services  
23 or emergency medical services.

24 (2) A license tag for a dog described under paragraph  
25 (1) shall be issued without charge.

26 (3) For purposes of paragraph (1)(iii), a letter on  
27 official letterhead from the respective police chief, fire  
28 chief, sheriff or director or authorized agent of the  
29 department, agency or office providing the services, along  
30 with evidence that the dog is a service dog, shall accompany

1     the application under section 201.

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3     Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.