
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 916 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY SHUSTERMAN, PROBST, HILL-EVANS, SANCHEZ AND GREEN,
APRIL 17, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS,
APRIL 17, 2023

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 short title and definitions, further providing
15 for definitions; and, in dangerous dogs, further providing
16 for court proceedings, certificate of registration and
17 disposition and for requirements.

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

20 Section 1. Section 102 of the act of December 7, 1982
21 (P.L.784, No.225), known as the Dog Law, is amended by adding a
22 definition to read:

23 Section 102. Definitions.

24 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
25 have, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the

1 meanings given to them in this section:

2 * * *

3 "Unprovoked." Action by a dog that includes biting,
4 attacking or forcibly coming into unwanted physical contact with
5 a person or domestic animal that is acting peaceably and
6 lawfully.

7 * * *

8 Section 2. Sections 502-A(a) and 503-A(b) of the act are
9 amended to read:

10 Section 502-A. Court proceedings, certificate of registration
11 and disposition.

12 (a) Summary offense of harboring a dangerous dog.--Any
13 person who has been attacked by one or more dogs, or anyone on
14 behalf of the person, a person whose domestic animal, dog or cat
15 has been killed or injured without provocation, the State dog
16 warden or the local police officer may file a complaint before a
17 magisterial district judge, charging the owner or keeper of the
18 a dog with harboring a dangerous dog. The owner or keeper of the
19 dog shall be guilty of the summary offense of harboring a
20 dangerous dog if the magisterial district judge finds beyond a
21 reasonable doubt that the following elements of the offense have
22 been proven:

23 (1) The dog has done any of the following unprovoked:

24 (i) [Inflicted severe injury on] Attacked a human
25 being [without provocation] on public or private
26 property[.] not owned, controlled or used with permission
27 by the owner of the dog.

28 (i.1) Inflicted severe injury on a human being on
29 private property owned, controlled or used with
30 permission by the owner of the dog.

1 (ii) Killed or inflicted severe injury on a domestic
2 animal, dog or cat [without provocation while off the
3 owner's property] while on public or private property not
4 owned, controlled or used with permission by the owner of
5 the dog.

6 (ii.1) Attacked a domestic animal, dog or cat,
7 whether or not an injury occurred, and the dog has a
8 history of attacking human beings or domestic animals,
9 dogs or cats unprovoked.

10 [(iii) Attacked a human being without provocation.]

11 (iv) Been used in the commission of a crime.

12 [(2) The dog has either or both of the following:

13 (i) A history of attacking human beings and/or
14 domestic animals, dogs or cats without provocation.

15 (ii) A propensity to attack human beings and/or
16 domestic animals, dogs or cats without provocation. A
17 propensity to attack may be proven by a single incident
18 of the conduct described in paragraph (1) (i), (ii), (iii)
19 or (iv).]

20 (3) The defendant is the owner or keeper of the dog.

21 * * *

22 Section 503-A. Requirements.

23 * * *

24 (b) Registration fee.--The registration fee for a dangerous
25 dog certificate shall be [\$500] \$1,000 per calendar year for the
26 life of the dog plus an additional amount set by the department
27 as may be necessary to cover the costs of issuing this
28 registration and enforcing this section. This registration fee
29 shall be in addition to any other fees collectable under this
30 act and shall be credited to the Dog Law Restricted Account for

1 the purpose of administering and enforcing this act.

2 * * *

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