

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5657

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Commerce, Trade, Housing & Financial Institutions, March 2, 1999

**Title:** An act relating to the ownership of veterinary medical facilities by animal care and control agencies and nonprofit humane societies.

**Brief Description:** Operating veterinary medical facilities.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kohl-Welles, Jacobsen and Fairley.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Commerce, Trade, Housing & Financial Institutions: 2/23/99, 3/2/99 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, TRADE, HOUSING & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5657 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Benton, Gardner, Hale, Rasmussen, T. Sheldon and Winsley.

**Staff:** Dave Cheal (786-7576)

**Background:** To practice veterinary medicine on animals owned by others for compensation requires a person to pass an examination and to hold a license.

Pet overpopulation is a serious problem that could be remedied in part by allowing humane societies to provide free neutering.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** Qualifying animal care and control agencies and nonprofit humane societies may employ veterinarians to provide free sterilization, vaccination, and microchip identification implants. These procedures may only be provided to pets owned by low-income individuals and households. Veterinarians employed at these facilities must be licensed as veterinarians.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute bill limits the veterinary procedures that can be offered by humane societies and animal care and control clinics to sterilization, vaccination, and implantation of electronic identification devices. These services can only be provided to low-income pet owners.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** Pet overpopulation is a serious problem that can be diminished by providing free pet sterilization service to low-income pet owners. This service is not competition to veterinarians. The law needs to be clear that this practice by humane societies and animal control clinics is not a violation of the veterinary licensure act.

**Testimony Against:** (Original bill) The bill is not limited to sterilization, vaccination and microchip implants. Even though limited services to low income pet owners might be the goal, the bill needs to be limited to that scope.

**Testified:** PRO: Dr. Evelyn Bittner, DVM, Nancy McKenney, The Humane Society for Seattle/King County; Richard Collard, SW WA Humane Society; Greg Bloomfield, Kitsap Humane Society; Jeanne Werner, The Humane Society for Tacoma/Pierce County; Mel McDonald, City of Seattle; Diane Webber, WA State Federation of Animal Care and Control Agencies; Kay Joubert, Progressive Animal Welfare Society; Scott VanValkenburg; Lisa Wathne, Humane Society of the U.S.; CON: Greg Hanon, WA State Veterinary; Dr. K.T. Wenwick, Medical Assn.; Dr. H. Kunnen.