

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6037

As Passed Senate, January 23, 2002

Title: An act relating to authorizing animal care and control agencies and nonprofit humane societies to provide limited veterinarian services.

Brief Description: Authorizing animal care and control agencies and nonprofit humane societies to provide limited veterinarian services.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & International Trade (originally sponsored by Senators Prentice, Kohl-Welles and Parlette).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & International Trade: 2/23/01, 2/28/01 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 3/13/01, 46-0; 1/23/02, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6037 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Parlette, Sheahan, Snyder, Spanel and Swecker.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: Animal control agencies and humane societies are not allowed to offer veterinarian services to the public. Additionally, only licensed veterinarians are allowed to operate a business that practices veterinary medicine. There is a desire that animal control agencies and humane societies be allowed to provide some veterinary care in case of emergencies and basic services to low income pet owners.

Summary of Bill: Animal control agencies and nonprofit humane societies are allowed to employ licensed veterinarians to provide some veterinary services to animals. Such organizations are allowed to provide emergency care. They are also allowed to provide sterilization, vaccination, and electronic identification to animals owned by households whose income is less than 80 percent of the median family income in their county. No other veterinarian services may be provided.

Organizations that employ veterinarians may not interfere with the veterinarian's professional judgment and may not infringe upon the utilization of their professional skill. The organization's facility and veterinarians are subject to the same rules as any other licensed veterinarian.

The Veterinary Board of Governors may adopt rules to ensure compliance with the act. If an organization is not in compliance, it may have its authority to provide veterinary services taken away.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill is necessary so low-income individuals can obtain limited procedures from their local animal shelter. It will allow the Veterinary Board of Governors to monitor the work done by these agencies. It won't allow public or nonprofit agencies to compete with veterinarians in providing services to the general public. This is the product of many years of work.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Gordon Walgren, Federation of Animal Control Agencies, Humane Society; Greg Hanon, WA State Veterinary Medical Assn.

House Amendment(s): Animal control agencies and humane societies are allowed to use only veterinarians or veterinary technicians acting within his or her scope of practice to perform limited services to animals owned by low-income households. The limited services that can be provided by animal control and humane societies continue to include electronic identification, surgical sterilization, and vaccinations.

The Veterinary Board of Governors adopts rules that establish registration requirements, governs the purchase of drugs used at these facilities, and ensures compliance. The limited service authority granted by registration may be denied, revoked or conditioned by the board. The Uniform Disciplinary Act is to govern unregistered operation, issuance and denial of registrations, and discipline of registrants. The Department of Health establishes registration fees.

The act takes effect July 1, 2003.