
**College & Workforce Development
Committee**

SSB 5212

Brief Description: Concerning the adoption of dogs and cats used for science or research purposes.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Palumbo, Wilson, L., Rolfes, Mullet, Wilson, C., Hunt and Kuderer).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires higher education research facilities that use dogs or cats for scientific, educational, or research purposes to offer the animal for adoption rather than euthanize post-research.

Hearing Date: 3/20/19

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.

The federal Animal Welfare Act (Act) of 1966 governs the treatment of research animals. The Act requires higher education institutions and research facilities that use research animals to have an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The Act requires the IACUC to have at least three members: one member must be a veterinarian and one must be a public member not affiliated with the institution in any way to represent general community interests. The IACUC's purpose is to conduct semiannual inspections of animal research facilities, including practices involving pain and animal conditions. In addition, research facilities and laboratories that use live vertebrate animals in research funded by the Public Health Service (PHS) must also adhere to the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's annual report indicates that in 2017, 392 cats and 929 dogs were used for research in Washington.

The Washington State Department of Health licenses veterinarians, animal control agencies, and humane societies.

Summary of Bill:

The Homes for Animal Heroes Act requires public and not-for-profit higher education facilities, and research facilities who collaborate with higher education facilities, that use dogs or cats for scientific, educational, or research purposes to make reasonable efforts to have the dogs or cats adopted post-research if the animal is deemed suitable for adoption by the facility's attending veterinarian. The facility may have its own adoption program or enter into an agreement with a licensed animal adoption organization. Licensed animal adoption organizations must be qualified under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, incorporated for the purpose of finding permanent adoptive homes for animals, and licensed by the Washington State Department of Health.

A research facility that provides a dog or cat for adoption is immune from any civil liability for acts or omissions relating to the adoption of the dog or cat, other than acts constituting willful or wanton misconduct.

The act does not create a duty for a licensed animal adoption organization to accept a dog or cat from a research facility. It also does not prohibit a facility from using dogs or cats for scientific research or educational use prior to determining whether an animal is adoptable.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.