

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5212

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
College & Workforce Development

**Title:** An act relating to adoption of dogs and cats used for science or research purposes.

**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 History:**

**Committee Activity:**

College & Workforce Development: 3/20/19, 3/28/19 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill  
(As Amended by Committee)**

- 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.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COLLEGE & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Leavitt, Vice Chair; Van Werven, Ranking Minority Member; Gildon, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Kraft, Mead, Paul, Pollet, Ramos, Rude, Sells, Slatter and Sutherland.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Young.

**Staff:** Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

**Background:**

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.

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*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 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, 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.

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.

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#### **Summary of Amended 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 an animal care and control agency or animal rescue group.

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 an animal care and control agency or animal rescue group 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.

#### **Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:**

The amended bill removes the definition of "licensed animal adoption organization" and replaces it with a reference to an animal care and control agency or animal rescue group as defined in RCW 82.04.040.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) There are certain research institutions that do adopt out their dogs and cats after research and some that euthanize them. When these animals are no longer being used for research, there is no need to destroy them. If they are deemed adoptable and are not aggressive, they should be adopted. Most of the time it is actually the researchers who adopt the dogs and cats.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Palumbo, prime sponsor; Maggie Yuse, University of Washington Medicine; Chris Mulick, Washington State University; and Dan Paul, The Humane Society of the United States.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.