

## Assembly Bill No. 258

### CHAPTER 542

An act to amend Section 121690 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to rabies.

[Approved by Governor October 7, 2011. Filed with  
Secretary of State October 7, 2011.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 258, Hagman. Rabies: vaccinations.

Existing law imposes various requirements upon dog owners in rabies areas designated by the State Public Health Officer. Any person who violates these requirements is guilty of an infraction, punishable by a fine not exceeding \$1,000. Violation of these requirements also results in impounding of the dog by the local jurisdiction. Among the requirements imposed under existing law is that a dog 4 months of age or older must be vaccinated against rabies.

This bill would exempt from the vaccination requirement a dog whose life would be endangered due to disease or other considerations that a veterinarian can verify and document if the dog received the vaccine, as determined by a licensed veterinarian on an annual basis. The bill would also require a dog that is exempt from the vaccination requirement to be confined to the premises of the owner, keeper, or harbinger and would require, if the dog is off the premises of the owner, keeper, or harbinger, the dog to be on a leash not to exceed 6 feet in length and to be under the direct physical control of an adult.

Existing law authorizes a city, city and county, or county to provide, by ordinance, for the issuance of a license for a dog that has attained the age of 4 months or older and has been vaccinated against rabies. Under existing law, the license period shall not extend beyond the remaining period of validity for the current rabies vaccination.

This bill would prohibit, in the event that a dog is exempted from the vaccination requirement, the license period from extending beyond one year.

By imposing a higher level of service upon local agencies and by changing the definition of a crime, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that with regard to certain mandates no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

With regard to any other mandates, this bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs so mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 121690 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

121690. In rabies areas, all of the following shall apply:

(a) Every dog owner, after his or her dog attains the age of four months, shall no less than once every two years secure a license for the dog as provided by ordinance of the responsible city, city and county, or county. License fees shall be fixed by the responsible city, city and county, or county, at an amount not to exceed limitations otherwise prescribed by state law or city, city and county, or county charter.

(b) (1) Every dog owner, after his or her dog attains the age of four months, shall, at intervals of time not more often than once a year, as may be prescribed by the department, procure its vaccination by a licensed veterinarian with a canine antirabies vaccine approved by, and in a manner prescribed by, the department, unless a licensed veterinarian determines, on an annual basis, that a rabies vaccination would endanger the dog's life due to disease or other considerations that the veterinarian can verify and document. The responsible city, county, or city and county may specify the means by which the dog owner is required to provide proof of his or her dog's rabies vaccination, including, but not limited to, by electronic transmission or facsimile.

(2) A request for an exemption from the requirements of this subdivision shall be submitted on an approved form developed by the department and shall include a signed statement by the veterinarian explaining the inadvisability of the vaccination and a signed statement by the dog owner affirming that the owner understands the consequences and accepts all liability associated with owning a dog that has not received the canine antirabies vaccine. The request shall be submitted to the local health officer, who may issue an exemption from the canine antirabies vaccine.

(3) The local health officer shall report exemptions issued pursuant to this subdivision to the department.

(4) A dog that is exempt from the vaccination requirements of this section shall be considered unvaccinated.

(5) A dog that is exempt from the vaccination requirements of this section shall, at the discretion of the local public health officer or the officer's designee, be confined to the premises of the owner, keeper, or harborer and, when off the premises, shall be on a leash the length of which shall not exceed six feet and shall be under the direct physical control of an adult. A dog that is exempt from the provisions of this section shall not have contact with a dog or cat that is not currently vaccinated against rabies.

(c) All dogs under four months of age shall be confined to the premises of, or kept under physical restraint by, the owner, keeper, or harborer. Nothing in this chapter and Section 120435 shall be construed to prevent the sale or transportation of a puppy four months old or younger.

(d) Any dog in violation of this chapter and any additional provisions that may be prescribed by any local governing body shall be impounded, as provided by local ordinance.

(e) The governing body of each city, city and county, or county shall maintain or provide for the maintenance of a pound system and a rabies control program for the purpose of carrying out and enforcing this section.

(f) Each city, county, or city and county shall provide dog vaccination clinics, or arrange for dog vaccination at clinics operated by veterinary groups or associations, held at strategic locations throughout each city, city and county, or county. The vaccination and licensing procedures may be combined as a single operation in the clinics. No charge in excess of the actual cost shall be made for any one vaccination at a clinic. No owner of a dog shall be required to have his or her dog vaccinated at a public clinic if the owner elects to have the dog vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian of the owner's choice.

All public clinics shall be required to operate under antiseptic immunization conditions comparable to those used in the vaccination of human beings.

(g) In addition to the authority provided in subdivision (a), the ordinance of the responsible city, city and county, or county may provide for the issuance of a license for a period not to exceed three years for dogs that have attained the age of 12 months or older and have been vaccinated against rabies or one year for dogs exempted from the vaccination requirement pursuant to subdivision (b). The person to whom the license is issued pursuant to this subdivision may choose a license period as established by the governing body of up to one, two, or three years. However, when issuing a license pursuant to this subdivision, the license period shall not extend beyond the remaining period of validity for the current rabies vaccination and, if a dog is exempted from the vaccination requirement pursuant to subdivision (b), the license period shall not extend beyond one year. A dog owner who complies with this subdivision shall be deemed to have complied with the requirements of subdivision (a).

(h) All information obtained from a dog owner by compliance with this chapter is confidential to the dog owner and proprietary to the veterinarian. This information shall not be used, distributed, or released for any purpose, except to ensure compliance with existing federal, state, county, or city laws or regulations.

SEC. 2. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution for certain costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district because, in that regard, this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section

17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

However, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains other costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

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