

SESSION OF 2026

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 344

As Amended by Senate Committee on
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Brief*

SB 344, as amended, would allow animal shelters to place neonate animals requiring certain care and treatment in foster homes, require animal shelters to display photographs of animals at certain locations during a holding period of a certain amount of time, define the term “neonate,” and increase the amount of time the Division of Animal Health, Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA), would be required to maintain records of inspections by the Division.

Animal Shelter Foster Care

The bill would allow an animal shelter to place in a foster home neonate animals that need treatment or care that the animal shelter cannot provide. The animal shelter would be required to display at the animal shelter and on the shelter’s website a photograph of the animal that is at a location other than the animal shelter during a holding period that continuing law states is a minimum of three full business days.

The bill would define “neonate” to mean a newborn animal that is less than eight weeks of age and dependent on such animal’s mother or a caregiver due to undeveloped biological functions related to feeding, regulation of body temperature, and elimination of waste.

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <https://klrd.gov/>

Record Keeping

The bill would require the Division of Animal Health to maintain records of inspections of the premises of pet animal licensees for a period of no less than five years. Current law requires the Division to maintain the records for no less than three years.

Technical and Conforming Amendments

The bill would make technical and conforming amendments to continuing law.

Background

The bill was introduced by the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources at the request of Senator Shane.

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

In the Senate Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Senator Shane and representatives of the Humane Society of Greater Kansas City, Kansas Pet Advocates, Leavenworth County Humane Society, and Southeast Kansas Humane Society. The proponents generally stated the bill would allow for more flexibility in the shelter system and would eliminate unnecessary euthanasia, as well as connect young animals in need to the care that they require for survival. The proponents also pointed out the inability of many shelters to support animals that may need care around the clock, citing staffing and funding issues.

Written-only proponent testimony was provided by representatives from AWOL Humane Society; City of Olathe Animal Care and Control; Kansas Animal Control Association; League of Kansas Municipalities; Pals Animal Rescue, Inc., and Spay-Neuter Kansas, Inc; Pawnee County Humane

Society; Sedgwick County Animal Control Advisory Board; and Wichita Animal Action League; and one private citizen.

Neutral testimony was provided by the Deputy Secretary of the KDA. The Deputy Secretary stated willingness to support the bill, but also expressed support for the language changes requested in the opponent testimony.

Opponent testimony was offered by a representative from Kansas Pet Professionals. The opponent suggested an amendment to remove the terms “sick” and “injured” from the bill. The opponent also claimed that animals in need of specific care would not receive adequate treatment outside of the controlled environment of a shelter.

Written-only opponent testimony was provided by representatives from BJ’s and Guys LLC, Kansas Pet Professionals, Petland Topeka, and one private citizen.

No other testimony was provided.

The Senate Committee amended the bill to:

- Remove the words “sick” and “injured” from the list of qualifications for transferring an animal to a foster home;
- Define the term “neonate”; and
- Change the number of years the Division of Animal Health is required to maintain records of inspections from no less than three years to no less than five years.

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, as introduced, the KDA indicates that enactment of the bill would have no fiscal effect on its operations.

Animal shelters; neonate; foster care; Kansas Department of Agriculture; Kansas Pet Animal Act; Division of Animal Health