

Hannah Kilcollins  
Caribou  
LD 1771

Hello.

I have many issues with this proposed bill. This will have severe implications if passed, my thoughts are as follows:

1. **Higher Costs for Pet Owners:** Transitioning licensing from municipal to state level could increase the financial burden on pet owners. Municipal kennels often have lower fees compared to state licensing, and fees can escalate under a state system. This might discourage responsible ownership and lead to fewer pets being licensed, thereby impacting community animal control efforts.
2. **Zoning Issues:** Reclassifying homes as commercial facilities could create significant zoning challenges for pet owners. Many municipalities have specific zoning regulations for commercial establishments, which may not be appropriate or feasible for private homes that care for a few pets. This could lead to legal and logistical hurdles for pet owners who wish to maintain their homes as private family residences.
3. **Enforcement Gaps:** A centralized state system may result in less effective enforcement of animal control laws. Local municipalities often have a better understanding of their community needs and can enforce regulations in a more targeted manner. Without local oversight, there could be lapses in enforcement, leading to increased neglect or abuse of animals.
4. **Inspection Delays:** With the state system potentially overburdened due to the volume of animal facilities and reduced staffing, inspection delays could result in prolonged waits for approvals and licenses. This would not only hinder responsible breeders and shelters but also place added stress on pet owners who need their licenses processed quickly to avoid legal issues.
5. **Loss of Local Control:** Municipalities understand their communities' unique needs and challenges better than a centralized state system. Local licensing allows for tailored regulations that effectively manage pet populations, ensure public safety, and maintain community standards. Eliminating local control may lead to a one-size-fits-all approach that doesn't adequately serve the diverse needs of different communities.
6. **Impact on Local Animal Shelters and Rescues:** Local shelters and rescues rely on community support and understanding. If licensing becomes state-run, these organizations could suffer from reduced local funding and support, making it more difficult to operate effectively and care for animals in need.
7. **Community Participation:** Municipal licenses often encourage community engagement and involvement in animal welfare issues. By shifting the system to a state level, opportunities for community-driven initiatives and discussions regarding local animal welfare could diminish.

By considering these arguments, it's clear that maintaining municipal kennel licenses not only preserves local control but ensures that pet ownership is affordable, manageable, and responsive to community needs.