

**S.B. No. 474 - A BILL TO BE ENTITLED AN ACT**

relating to the unlawful restraint of a dog; creating a criminal offense.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 821, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Subchapter E to read as follows:

**SUBCHAPTER E. UNLAWFUL RESTRAINT OF DOG**

Sec. 821.101. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Adequate shelter" means a clean and sturdy structure:

(A) that allows the dog protection from rain, hail, sleet, snow, and subfreezing temperatures; and

(B) with dimensions that allow the dog while in the shelter to stand erect, sit, turn around, and lie down in a normal position.

(2) "Collar" means a band constructed of nylon, leather, or similar material, specifically designed to be placed around the neck of a dog.

(3) "Harness" means a set of straps constructed of nylon, leather, or similar material, specifically designed to restrain or control a dog.

(4) "Owner" means a person who owns or has custody or control of a dog.

(5) "Properly fitted" means, with respect to a collar or harness, a collar or harness that:

(A) is appropriately sized for the dog based on the dog's measurements and body weight;

(B) does not choke the dog or impede the dog's normal breathing or swallowing; and

(C) is attached around the dog in a manner that does not allow for escape and does not cause pain or injury to the dog.

(6) "Restraint" means a chain, rope, tether, leash, cable, or other device that attaches a dog to a stationary object or trolley system.

Sec. 821.102. UNLAWFUL RESTRAINT OF DOG; OFFENSE.

(a) An owner may not leave a dog outside and unattended by use of a restraint unless the owner provides the dog access to:

(1) adequate shelter;

(2) an area that allows the dog to avoid standing water;

(3) shade from direct sunlight; and

(4) potable water.

(b) An owner may not restrain a dog outside and unattended by use of a restraint that:

(1) is a chain;

(2) has weights attached;

(3) is shorter in length than the greater of:

(A) five times the length of the dog, as measured from the tip of the dog's nose to the base of the dog's tail; or

(B) 10 feet;

(4) is not attached to a properly fitted collar or harness; or

(5) causes pain or injury to the dog.

(c) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly violates this section. The restraint of each dog that is in violation is a separate offense.

(d) An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor, except that the offense is a Class B misdemeanor if the person has previously been convicted under this section.

(e) If conduct constituting an offense under this section also constitutes an offense under any other law, the actor may be prosecuted under this section, the other law, or both.

#### Sec. 821.103. EXCEPTIONS.

(a) It is an exception to the application of Section 821.102 that:

(1) the owner uses a restraint on the dog in a public camping or recreational area in compliance with the requirements of the public camping or recreational area as defined by a federal, state, or local authority or jurisdiction;

(2) the owner uses a restraint on the dog while the owner and dog engage in, or actively train for, an activity conducted under a valid license issued by this state provided the activity is associated with the use or presence of a dog;

(3) the owner uses a restraint on the dog while the owner and dog engage in conduct directly related to the business of shepherding or herding cattle or livestock;

(4) the owner uses a restraint on the dog while the owner and dog engage in conduct directly related to the business of cultivating agricultural products;

(5) the owner leaves the dog unattended in an open-air truck bed only for the time necessary for the owner to complete a temporary task that requires the dog to be left unattended in the truck bed;

(6) the owner, or another person with the owner's permission, takes the dog from the owner's residence or property and restrains the dog for not longer than the time necessary for the owner to engage in an activity that requires the dog to be temporarily restrained; or

(7) the owner uses a restraint on the dog while the owner and dog are engaged in, or actively training for, hunting or field trialing.

(b) Section 821.102 (b) (3) does not apply to a restraint attached to a trolley system that allows a dog to move along a running line for a distance equal to or greater than the lengths specified under that subdivision.

(c) This subchapter does not prohibit a person from walking a dog with a handheld leash.

Sec. 821.104. EFFECT OF SUBCHAPTER ON OTHER LAW. This subchapter does not preempt a local regulation relating to the restraint of a dog or affect the authority of a political subdivision to adopt or enforce an ordinance or requirement relating to the restraint of a dog if the regulation, ordinance, or requirement:

(1) is compatible with and equal to or more stringent than a requirement prescribed by this subchapter; or

(2) relates to an issue not specifically addressed by this subchapter.

SECTION 2. Subchapter D, Chapter 821, Health and Safety Code, is repealed.

SECTION 3. The change in law made by this Act applies only to an offense committed on or after the effective date of this Act. An offense committed before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the offense was committed, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose. For purposes of this section, an offense was committed before the effective date of this Act if any element of the offense occurred before that date.

SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.