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H.B. 351
135th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Rep. T. Young

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SUMMARY

- Prohibits a person from knowingly treating a companion animal corpse in a way that would outrage reasonable community sensibilities.
- Specifies that a person who violates the prohibition is guilty of a fifth degree felony and, in addition to other potential penalties, requires the offender to undergo psychological evaluation or counseling.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Abuse of a companion animal corpse

The bill prohibits a person from knowingly treating a companion animal corpse in a way that would outrage reasonable community sensibilities unless authorized by law.¹ Under the bill, a companion animal is a dog, cat, or any animal that is kept inside a residential dwelling (it does not include livestock or any wild animal).²

The bill applies certain existing exemptions that pertain to the laws governing animal abuse to the new prohibition. Most applicably, the prohibition does not apply to either of the following:

1. A companion animal used in scientific research conducted by an institution in accordance with the federal Animal Welfare Act and related regulations; and
2. The lawful practice of veterinary medicine by a licensed person.³

¹ R.C. 959.131(H).

² R.C. 959.131(A)(1).

³ R.C. 959.131(I).

The bill specifies that a person who violates the above prohibition is guilty of a fifth degree felony,⁴ which is generally punishable by a prison term of six to twelve months⁵ and a fine of up to \$2,500.⁶

Additionally, if a person is convicted of or pleads guilty to the violation, a court must impose a requirement that the offender undergo psychological evaluation or counseling in addition to any other criminal penalty. The court must order the offender to pay the costs of the evaluation or counseling.⁷

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	12-04-23

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⁴ R.C. 959.99(E)(6).

⁵ R.C. 2929.14(A)(5), not in the bill.

⁶ R.C. 2929.18(A)(3)(e), not in the bill.

⁷ R.C. 959.99(E)(6).