



**OPPOSE HB 3963 by Farrar  
and  
SB 908, by Zaffirini  
Relating to establishment and functions of  
The Animal Welfare Commission**

**🐾 This bill is an “animal rights” agenda for the next legislative session. The proposed legislation would establish a commission on “animal welfare.” Unfortunately, the phrase “animal welfare” is the cloak for “animal rights” presently.**

**🐾 The real purpose is to try to legitimize an animal rights agenda by establishing a state funded commission on their topics of interest for the 2017 legislative session.** The commission must be established by December of 2015 and provide its report on these topics by January 1, 2017 conveniently in time for the start of the legislative session. It expires by the terms of the proposed statute at the close of the 2017 session on June 1, 2017.

**🐾 There is no way a commission could be established that is knowledgeable on all these issues to have any sort of meaningful input on these widely varied topics. However, that is not the intention of this bill. The reason for its existence is to drive the agenda of “animal rights” groups under the guise of animal welfare and to lend credence to their mission all at the taxpayer’s expense.**

**🐾 History teaches us that the “animal rights” groups that are well funded and well organized are adept at getting themselves appointed to committees and this commission would be no exception.** This bill would give their agenda a rubber stamp from this commission to push those issues listed for consideration by the commission.

**🐾 This is an unnecessary layer of government that is simply not needed. The topics for the commission’s concern range from exotic animals to circus animals to extinguishing ownership rights of pet owners whose dog or cat is impounded by animal control.** There is no way a commission of lay people could possibly be educated on all these facets of animal issues that include the law on dangerous dogs, feral cats and issues with animal shelters.

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

relating to establishment and functions of the Animal Welfare Commission.

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

SECTION 1. ANIMAL WELFARE COMMISSION. (a) The Animal Welfare Commission is created to study and provide recommendations to the legislature regarding animal welfare issues, including the:

- (1) regulation of the ownership of exotic animals;
- (2) transfer of animal ownership from an owner to an animal shelter after the shelter's acquisition of the animal;
- (3) inspection of animal shelters;
- (4) regulation of veterinarians under the Occupations Code in relation to animal shelters;
- (5) management of the coyote population in urban areas;
- (6) welfare of circus animals in this state;
- (7) definition of "animal shelter" in Title 10, Health and Safety Code;
- (8) definition of "dangerous dog" in Title 10, Health and Safety Code;
- (9) efficacy of trap, sterilize, and return programs;

and

- (10) protocols for animal euthanasia.

(b) The Animal Welfare Commission consists of the following members:

- (1) three members appointed by the governor, one of whom must represent the interests of animal shelters and another of whom must represent the interests of law enforcement in this state;
- (2) the lieutenant governor or a designee of the lieutenant governor;
- (3) the speaker of the house of representatives or a designee of the speaker;
- (4) the commissioner of state health services or a designee of the commissioner;
- (5) the executive director of the Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners or a designee of the executive director;
- (6) the executive director of the Animal Health Commission or a designee of the executive director; and
- (7) the executive director of the Parks and Wildlife Department or a designee of the executive director.

(c) When making initial appointments under Subsection (b) of this section, the governor shall designate one of the governor's appointees as the presiding officer of the Animal Welfare Commission.

(d) Each appointing official shall appoint members to the Animal Welfare Commission not later than December 31, 2015.

(e) If a vacancy arises on the Animal Welfare Commission, the vacancy must be filled as soon as practicable in the same manner as the original appointment as provided by Subsection (b) of this

section.

(f) The Animal Welfare Commission shall meet not later than the 30th day after the date the final initial appointment is made under Subsection (b) of this section and shall meet regularly as necessary at the call of the presiding officer.

(g) An Animal Welfare Commission member is not entitled to reimbursement of expenses or to compensation.

(h) On the Animal Welfare Commission's request, the comptroller of public accounts or a state agency, department, or office shall provide any assistance the commission requires to perform the commission's duties.

SECTION 2. REPORT ON ANIMAL WELFARE. Not later than January 1, 2017, the Animal Welfare Commission shall provide to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives a final report on animal welfare in this state. The report must include:

- (1) recommendations for efficient and effective solutions to the commission's charge, in addition to solutions to other animal welfare issues identified by the commission;
- (2) proposed legislation necessary to implement the recommendations described by Subdivision (1) of this section;
- (3) administrative recommendations; and
- (4) a complete explanation of each of the commission's recommendations.

SECTION 3. APPLICABILITY OF OTHER LAW. The Animal Welfare Commission is not subject to Chapter 2210, Government Code.

SECTION 4. EXPIRATION. This Act expires and the Animal Welfare Commission is abolished June 1, 2017.

SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.