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## **HB 925 by Dutton**

### **HB 925 (minors 15 years old or under cannot handle or care for a pit bull without adult supervision)**

#### **Dutton (State Affairs)**

1. This bill would prohibit minors 15 years of age and younger from handling or caring for a pit bull without adult supervision.
2. This bill would create civil liability on the pit bull's owner for allowing a minor to handle the dog if it causes serious bodily injury or death while the dog is being handled or cared for by the minor.
3. The bill also makes it a Class C misdemeanor for the owner of a pit bull to allow a minor 15 or under to handle or care for the dog.
4. The bill includes American Pit Bull Terriers, American Staffordshire Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers and mixed breeds that exhibit distinguishing characteristics of these breeds.

#### **Why We Oppose this Bill:**

1. This bill is breed specific. Breed specific laws are not allowed pursuant to Sec. 822.047 which provides that cities and counties can enact more stringent dangerous dog laws if they are not specific to breed.
2. This bill does not take into account the handling of dogs by junior handlers in competition, dog shows, hunting, as working dogs, therapy dogs, assistance dogs, etc.
3. This bill does not apply to dog owners equally but instead carves out a targeted breed, and or type of owner.
4. This bill is vague and does not define what "handle" or "care for" mean.
5. This bill is unnecessary because cities and counties can enact their other laws as long as they are not breed specific. A local government could restrict handling of dogs based on age as long as the law applied to all dogs and dog owners.
6. This bill is vague as to what constitutes a "pit bull" and does not define who would make that determination. Most people cannot identify any of the listed breeds successfully and it leaves wide latitude for what constitutes a mixed breed that exhibits distinguishing characteristic of a pit bull.