

## Council Substitute for House Bill No. 219

An act relating to the Gertrude Maxwell Save a Pet Act; providing a short title; creating s. 570.97, F.S.; creating a direct-support organization for the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; providing for the organization and operation of the direct-support organization; providing for the purpose of the direct-support organization; providing for the membership of the board of directors; providing for honorary board members of the direct-support organization; providing for appointment of Gertrude Maxwell or her designee as the first honorary board member of the direct-support organization; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, it is estimated that over 800,000 homeless, discarded, abandoned, stray, and unclaimed dogs and cats are euthanized in the state each year, and

WHEREAS, in 7 years one female cat and her offspring can theoretically produce 420,000 cats, and in 6 years one female dog and her offspring can theoretically produce 67,000 dogs, and

WHEREAS, the cost to spay or neuter a pet or feral cat is about \$20-\$70 per animal, while the approximate cost to capture, house, feed, and eventually euthanize a homeless animal is about \$100, and

WHEREAS, reducing euthanasia of unwanted animals can save lives of companion animals and potential service animals and save tax dollars, and many homeless animals can be trained as service animals and therapy animals, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. This act may be cited as the “Gertrude Maxwell Save a Pet Act.”

Section 2. Section 570.97, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

570.97 Gertrude Maxwell Save a Pet Direct-Support Organization.—

(1) The Gertrude Maxwell Save a Pet Direct-Support Organization is created within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and shall be governed by this section and ss. 570.902 and 570.903. The purpose of this direct-support organization is to provide grants to animal shelters for spaying and neutering animals, provide grants for shelters and services during times of emergencies, and develop and disseminate pet care education materials. The direct-support organization shall not participate in, endorse, or financially support political activities at the national, state, or local level.

(2) The board of directors of the direct-support organization shall include one representative of each of the following groups as recommended by that

group: the Florida Veterinary Medical Association, the Cat Fanciers' Association, the Florida Association of Kennel Clubs, a humane organization designated by the commissioner, the Florida Animal Control Association, the National Rifle Association, a consumer member not affiliated with any of the aforementioned associations, and the commissioner or his or her designee.

(3) The board of directors of the direct-support organization may appoint up to three nonvoting honorary members. Nominees should be individuals, companies, or organizations that have exemplified themselves or have made significant contributions to the health, safety, or well-being of animals. Honorary board members shall serve for a maximum of two consecutive annual terms. The commissioner shall appoint the board of directors as well as the honorary board members.

Section 3. Gertrude Maxwell or her designee shall be appointed as the first honorary member of the board of directors of the direct-support organization created by this act.

Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor May 28, 2008.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 28, 2008.