

CHAPTER 2024-257

Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 273

An act relating to public records; amending s. 823.15, F.S.; providing an exemption from public records requirements for records containing certain information pertaining to persons with legal custody of an animal from an animal shelter or animal control agency operated by a humane society or a local government; providing for future legislative review and repeal of the exemption; providing a statement of public necessity; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Subsection (7) is added to section 823.15, Florida Statutes, to read:

823.15 Public or private animal agencies; sterilization required for dogs and cats released; recordkeeping requirements; microchipping; public records exemption.—

(7) Personal identifying information of a person who fosters, adopts, or otherwise receives legal custody of an animal from an animal shelter or animal control agency operated by a humane society or a county, municipality, or other incorporated political subdivision held by the shelter or agency is exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution. This subsection is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act in accordance with s. 119.15 and shall stand repealed on October 2, 2029, unless reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

Section 2. The Legislature finds that it is a public necessity that the personal identifying information of a person who fosters, adopts, or otherwise receives legal custody of an animal from an animal shelter or animal control agency operated by a humane society or a county, municipality, or other incorporated political subdivision held by the shelter or agency be made exempt from s. 119.07(1), Florida Statutes, and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution. The Legislature finds that, as reflected in s. 823.15(1), Florida Statutes, it is an important public policy of the state to encourage the fostering, adoption, or receipt of animals and to reduce euthanasia rates for animals in animal shelters and animal control agencies. Although such shelters and agencies are motivated to find new homes or placements for animals in their custody, potential fosterers, adopters, and other persons considering receiving legal custody of animals may become discouraged from fostering, adopting, or receiving legal custody of the animals if the prior owners who lost or surrendered legal custody of the animals, or who did not reclaim the animals within the applicable time periods, can obtain their personal identifying information and attempt to

regain legal custody of the animals from such persons through stalking, harassment, or intimidation. As such, the release of such personal identifying information may jeopardize the safety of animal fosterers, adopters, and other persons receiving legal custody of animals and may have a chilling effect on the recruitment of persons to adopt, foster, or otherwise receive legal custody of animals from an animal shelter or animal control agency.

Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 21, 2024.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 21, 2024.