

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC }
OF THE PHILIPPINES }
FIRST REGULAR SESSION }

5 FEB -1 P6:11

RECEIVED BY: 
SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES

S. NO. 1899

Introduced by Senator Juan M. Flavier

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to mandate the implementation of a Nationwide Rabies Vaccination Program covering domesticated animals and stray cats and dogs.

For the past years, the incidence of rabies victim is continuously rising. It has been reported that this vicious disease needlessly claimed the lives of two hundred persons each year. Thus the loss of lives and the medical care for those bitten and the fear posed to the people should be addressed.

In this bill, rabies vaccination services shall be conducted and supervised by the Department of Agriculture every six months. On the other hand, the Department of Health shall conduct the said services for those individuals bitten by domesticated pets or stray cats and dogs. Both the Bureau of Animal Industry and the Department of Health shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations.

The passage of this bill is highly recommended.


JUAN M. FLAVIER
Senator

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AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CONTROL AND ERADICATION OF RABIES, PRESCRIBING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Title – This Act shall be known as the “Anti-Rabies Act of 2005.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy – It is the declared policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people. Towards this end, a system for the control, prevention of the spread and eventually the eradication of rabies shall be provided.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms – For the purpose of this Act, the following terms shall mean :

- (a) “Dog” refers to a common quadrupled domestic animal belonging to the order carnivore (male or female), scientifically known as canis familiars.
- (b) “Owner” refers to any person keeping, harboring or having charge, care or control of a dog including his/her representative.
- (c) “Bitten” refers to an act by which a dog seizes, cuts and grips with its teeth so that the skin of a person has been wounded, pierced or scratched.
- (d) “Rabies” refers to a fatal disease caused by a lyssavirus, transmitted mainly through the bite of an infected animal and is characterized by muscle paralysis, hydrophobia and aerophobia, and others.
- (e) “Rabies vaccination” refers to inoculation of a dog with a rabies vaccine by a licensed government or private veterinarian or trained individual under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

- (f) "Public place" refers to any place open to the public like parks, malls, markets, streets, etc.
- (g) "Stray dog" refers to any dog leaving its owner's place or premise and no longer under the effective control of its owner.
- (h) "Susceptible animal" refers to any mammal, which can be infected by rabies.
- (i) "Leash" refers to a line for leading or restraining an animal, the length of which should be approximately one (1) meter.
- (j) "Pound" refers to a public enclosure for stray animals.
- (k) "Impound" refers to seize and hold in the custody of the law.
- (l) "Concerned Officials" refer to barangay officials, health workers, police officers or government veterinarians.
- (m) "National Rabies Prevention and Control Program" refers to a multi-agency program to control the rabies in the Philippines.

SECTION 4. National Rabies Prevention and Control Program. – It is hereby mandated that there shall be a National Rabies Prevention and Control Program. The program shall be a multi-agency effort in controlling and eradicating rabies in the country. Among its component activities include mass vaccination of dogs, impounding of stray dogs, conduct of information and education campaign on the prevention and control of rabies, provision of pre-exposure treatment to high risk personnel and post-exposure to animal-bite victims as well as the encouragement of the practice responsible dog ownership. The Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Department of Education (DE) as well as local government units (LGUs) shall implement the program with the assistance of non-government organizations (NGOs).

SECTION 5. Responsibilities of Pet Owners. – All dog owners shall be required to :

- (a) Have their dogs vaccinated against rabies at three (3) months old and every thereafter, either by a licensed government or private veterinarian or trained individual under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian;
- (b) Register their dogs at three (3) months upon vaccination;
- (c) Maintain control over their dogs not allow them to roam the streets or any public place without somebody holding them with a leash;

- (d) Ensure that recently vaccinated dogs and cats are transported from one place to another only after a month from the date of rabies' vaccination;
- (e) Provide their dogs with proper grooming, adequate and clean shelter;
- (f) Report immediately within twenty-four (24) hours any dog biting incident to the concerned officials for evaluation or appropriate action; and
- (g) Assist the dog-bite victim immediately and shoulder the medical expenses incurred and incidental expenses relative to the victim's injuries.

SECTION 6. Responsibilities of Government Agencies. – The following government agencies, which shall jointly implement the National Rabies Prevention and Control Program, shall be tasked to:

(A) Department of Agriculture

- (1) Improve and upgrade existing animal rabies laboratory diagnostic capabilities to ensure better services to the people;
- (2) Ensure the availability and adequate supply of animal anti-rabies vaccine at all times;
- (3) Undertake free anti-rabies vaccination of dogs, cats and other susceptible animal;
- (4) Establish and maintain rabies-free zones;
- (5) Encourage collaborative activities with the DOH, the Dep-Ed, the DILG, NGOs and other concerned sectors; and
- (6) Strengthen information, education and communication (IEC) activities on rabies prevention and control.

(B) Department of Health

- (1) Ensure the availability and adequate supply of human anti-rabies vaccines at all times;
- (2) Provide for free post-exposure treatment to individuals bitten by animals suspected of being rabid which will consist of the initial vaccine and immunoglobulin dose;
- (3) Provide for free pre-exposure treatment to high risk personnel, e.g., laboratory staff, veterinarians, animal handlers, vaccinators and other persons working with rabies virus;
- (4) Assist in the development of appropriate health education strategy to inform the public on rabies surveillance system;

- (5) Develop and maintain a human rabies surveillance system; and
- (6) Encourage collaborative activities with the DA, the Dep-Ed, the DILG, NGOs and other concerned sectors.

(C) Department of Education

- (1) Assist in the dissemination of information on rabies, its prevention and control through school health teaching/curriculum;
- (2) Assist in the mass immunization campaign in the community; and
- (3) Encourage collaborative activities with the DA, the DOH, the DILG, NGOs and other concerned sectors.

(D) Department of Interior and Local Government

- (1) Encouragement of the participation of local governments in rabies control activities;
- (2) Encourage the strict enforcement of ordinance relevant to rabies control activities;
- (3) Provide local fund allocation for anti-rabies program implementation in the LGUs; and
- (4) Encourage collaborative activities with the DA, the Dep-Ed, NGOs and other concerned sectors.

SECTION 7. Assistance of Nongovernment Organization. – the agencies tasked to implement the Anti-Rabies Program shall seek the assistance and participation of NGOs in any of the following activities:

- (1) Community mobilization;
- (2) Health education/information dissemination on rabies;
- (3) Mass anti-rabies campaign; and
- (4) Surveillance/reporting of Local Government Units.

SECTION 8. Responsibilities of Local Government Units. – LGUs must implement in their respective localities the following:

- (1) Conduct routine rabies vaccination of all dogs and cats in their respective areas;
- (2) Strictly enforce dog impounding activities to eliminate stray dogs;
- (3) See to it that dogs are leashed/confined within the premises of the owner's house or owner's fenced surroundings;
- (4) Ensure that all dogs are properly immunized and registered;
- (5) Establish animal-bite treatment centers in all rural health units; and
- (6) Set aside funds for anti-rabies program.

SECTION 9. Impounding and Disposition of Unregistered, Stray and Unvaccinated Dogs. - Unregistered, stray or unvaccinated dogs shall be put in a dog pound and disposed of, taking into consideration the following guidelines:

- (1) Unregistered, stray or unvaccinated dogs shall be impounded.
- (2) Impounded dogs not claimed after five (5) days from impoundment shall be sold in a public auction, the proceeds of which shall be used for the anti-rabies program or, otherwise disposed of in any manner authorized, subject to the pertinent provisions of Republic Act No. 8485 or the Animal Welfare Act of 1998; and
- (3) The owner of impounded dogs shall pay an impoundment fee to any authorized person or entity having custody or charge of the said dog.

SECTION 10. Penalties. –

- (1) Any person who fails or refuse to have his dog immunized against rabies shall be punished by a fine of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) or imprisonment of one (1) day or both, at the discretion of the court.
- (2) To secure the release of an impounded dog, a dog owner shall pay a fine of not less than Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) but not more than One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00).
- (3) A dog owner who refuses to have his-her dog vaccinated against rabies shall be liable for the cost of vaccination of both the animal and the dog-bite victim, including the latter's medical expenses.
- (4) A dog owner who refuses to have his/her dog put under observation after said dog has bitten an individual shall be meted a fine of Twenty-Five Thousand Pesos (P25,000.00); further, a dog owner who refuses to have his/her dog put under observation and refuses to shoulder the medical expenses of the person bitten by his/her dog shall be meted a fine of Twenty-Five Thousand Pesos (P25,000.00) and imprisonment of one (1) week.
- (5) A dog owner who refuses to put a leash on his/her dog when the latter is brought out of the house shall be meted a fine of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) or imprisonment of one (1) day or both.
- (6) Any authorized government employee who refuses or fails to administer anti-rabies vaccination when necessary shall be punished by suspension from office of not less than five (5) days but more than fifteen (15) days.

SECTION 11. Implementing Rule and Regulation. – The DA, in coordination with the DOH, the DILG and the Dep-Ed, shall issue the necessary rules and regulation for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 12. Appropriations. – The amount necessary to implementing the provision of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the DOH, the Bureau of animal Industry under the DA, the DILG and the Dep-Ed. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Acts.

SECTION 13. Reparability Clause. – In case any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the other provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 14. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.