

## 2019 Legislative Summary for the GA General Assembly

**Many thanks to our generous donors for helping the GPC promote animal protection laws during the 2019 General Assembly. Please continue to support our lobbyist in 2020 so we can amplify OUR VOICE for animals at the GA Capitol!**

For the third year in a row, the pet store industry, led by Petland and armed with expensive lobbyists, was thwarted from introducing or passing legislation that would have usurped authority from 10 local ordinances banning the retail sales of pets sourced from cruel pet mills. Petland has deep pockets so they may return for another attempt in 2020 – but the tide is turning. A growing number of lawmakers are now aware that ethical breeders do not wholesale their litters to pet stores – thanks to our dedicated team of professional lobbyists from four animal welfare organizations (including GPC) and compassionate advocates like yourselves. In addition, several large-scale puppy mill raids in 2018-2019 have revealed the truth to lawmakers and the public about the horrific consequences of reckless and mass breeding. The GPC would also like to express appreciation to First Lady Marty Kemp for calling attention to pet overpopulation by hosting an adoption event at the Governor's mansion in April!

The following list of bills was prepared by Debra Berger, Georgia State Director, Humane Society of the United States.

### **Positive legislation for animals that passed in 2019:**

**SB 31: PASSED** (Sponsored by Senator Michael “Doc” Rhett)  
<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20192020/SB/31>  
**Law Enforcement Officers and Agencies; performing any duty at the scene of an emergency; law enforcement officers shall not be liable; clarify Law Enforcement Officers that damage property while saving people or pets will be immune from civil liability.**

### **Harmful legislation for animals that did not succeed in 2019:**

**HB545:** (Sponsored by Representative Tom McCall and others)  
<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20192020/HB/545>  
**Nuisances; treatment of agricultural facilities and operations and forest land; provisions**  
*Passage of this bill would have easily protected puppy mill operations. A coalition of environmental groups opposed it as well.*

**SB 45:** (Sponsored by Senator Brandon Beach and others)  
<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20192020/SB/45>  
**Rural Georgia Jobs and Growth Act**  
*In actuality, this is a horseracing bill dressed up as a jobs bill.*

## **Animal protection bills that were introduced and may appear in 2020:**

**SB 32:** (Sponsored by Senator Kirkpatrick)

<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20192020/SB/32>

**Torts; conditions upon immunity from civil liability in instances of rendering emergency care; provide**

*Passed many steps until defeated on the House floor. Look for an updated version in 2020.*

**SB 69:** (Sponsored by Senator Steve Henson)

<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20192020/SB/69>

**Animal Protection; persons convicted of cruelty to animals after July 1, 2019 from obtaining pet animals; prohibit**

*Excellent goal but needs to be re-written to be more enforceable.*

**HB136:** (Sponsored by Representative Demetrious Douglas)

<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20192020/HB/136>

**Animal protection; provide for photographic notification and breed of impounded animals on an animal shelter's website**

*Well intentioned, but not realistic for many reasons. Author will be researching best way to achieve the goal of reuniting people and their pets.*

**HB582:** (Sponsored by Representative Billy Mitchell)

<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20192020/HB/582>

**Domestic relations; pet animal care plan in marriage dissolution proceedings; create**

*Introduced late in session; watch for it next year.*

**HB268:** (Sponsored by Representative Billy Mitchell)

<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20192020/HB/268>

**Criminal procedure; record restriction for individuals convicted of certain felonies and misdemeanors under certain circumstances; provide**

*Related to review of criminal history; does not allow animal cruelty history to be restricted on records.*

**HB66:** (Sponsored by Representative Carolyn Hugly)

<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20192020/HB/66>

**Special license plates; certain special plates for motorcycles; provide**

*Could also include the Spay Neuter plate!*

**HB 371:** (Sponsored by Representative Karla Drenner)

<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20192020/HB/371>

**Uniform rules of the road; securing or containing of live animals in the back of motor vehicles operated on certain highways; require**

*Rep. Drenner wants to promote her bill as a **public safety bill, not an animal welfare bill**, so asked for no action from animal advocates. Sponsors include Tom McCall and it will be heard in the Agriculture Committee.*

**SB76:** (Sponsored by Senator Ellis Black)

<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20192020/SB/76>

**Veterinarians and Veterinary Technicians; veterinary technicians as veterinary nurses; redesignate**

*Supported by the Georgia Veterinary Medical Association and the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association.*

### **Harmful legislation for animals that passed in 2019:**

**SB 72: PASSED** (Sponsored by Senator Tyler Harper and others)

<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20192020/SB/72>

**Game and Fish; hunting on wildlife management areas; prohibition; remove**

*Expands hunting areas and seasons; permits use of quiet airguns. Companion animals are at greater risk for injury and death due to the muted discharge of airguns.*