

Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

Tricia Melillo 271-3077

HB 1626-FN-A, relative to the repeal of certain designated funds and relative to the apportionment of dog license fees.

Hearing Date: April 2, 2024

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Gray, Murphy, Abbas, Soucy and Perkins Kwoka

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill repeals certain designated funds and changes dog licensing fees.

Sponsors:

Rep. D. McGuire
Sen. Gray

Rep. Almy

Sen. D'Allesandro

Who supports the bill: Sen. James Gray, Commissioner Shawn Jasper, Suzan Dentry,

Who opposes the bill: Patricia Little, Joan Dargie

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator James Gray

- HB 1626 is a housekeeping bill.
- He is on the committee that does a review of dedicated funds.
- This bill is the result of the committee's recommendation.
- He was given an amendment but he does not believe it is germane to the bill.

Shawn Jasper – Commissioner, Department of Agriculture

- They do not need to remove lines 9-13 they could just put the fee back to \$2.00.
- If they remove that section, the senior citizens will be paying the population control fee.
- There is no relationship between what they were trying to do and the senior citizen \$2.00 fee.
- He asked the committee to strike on line 10 the \$1.75 and return it to \$2.00.
- Additionally, he asked the committee to consider a germane amendment to RSA 437:A:4 which is specifically mentioned on line 8 of the bill.
- They would like to change the 80% to 100% which is the amount of money they pay to veterinarians.
- One of the reasons that this fund is increasing is that they are seeing a significant decrease in the number of veterinarians who are willing to participate in this program.
- Putting it to 100% will not damage the fee and it will hopefully entice a few veterinarians to participate again.
- The veterinarian lab at UNH is struggling for funds and they have too many funds in this one.

- This does not change the cost for anybody it just realigns the income and expenses more appropriately.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition:

Patricia Little – City Clerk, Keene

- She has been the city clerk for a little over 45 years so she is very familiar with the dog statute.
- She is only opposed to two sentences on lines 9-13 and believes they are drafting errors.
- Those lines describe a reduction of 25 cents from the fee that they would collect from a senior citizen for their first dog.
- She does not believe that the 25 reduction is necessary for the Department of Agriculture to have a re-shifting of appropriations.
- In 1993, the pet overpopulation fund was created and at the same time, the senior citizen license fee was reduced.
- There was an informal relationship between the two, one being income the clerks received and the other being how they disperse funds for the state.
- Like marriage license fees, a portion of the dog license fees is directed to various State Funds.
- They do not object to collecting the fees for the state but they do object to the slight reduction in the senior citizen license fee.
- She has discussed with Commissioner Jasper that the fee reduction is not necessary for the original intent of the bill.
- It is midway through the license period and if this goes into effect they will have to issue a 25 cent refund check to all the seniors.
- Issuing the refunds will cost the town or city about \$45.
- She asked the committee to consider an amendment that would remove lines 9-13.
- Senator Murphy asked what the license period is.
 - Ms. Little replied that it starts on May 1st and ends April 30th for all cities and towns in New Hampshire.
- Senator Gray asked if that section of the bill was made effective May 1, 2025, would that take care of her refund issue.
 - Ms. Little replied yes it would but she does not see the need for the reduction of 25 cents. The senior citizens are exempt from paying into the pet overpopulation fund so there is not relationship between what they pay and that fund.
- Senator Gray asked what the fee is for someone who gets a new dog in September.
 - Ms. Little replied that it is \$4.50 if they are spade and \$7.00 if they are not. There is \$2.00 for the senior overpopulation fund and cities and towns are authorized under RSA 466:39 to add another dollar. They are generally at \$7.00 and \$10.00.
- Senator Gray asked if they paid by May 1st that fee would be in effect for this law and if they registered in September they would pay the fee that was prescribed by law in September and commented he does not see the need for a refund.
 - Ms. Little replied that the need for a refund is if the senior citizen still mails in a \$2.00 check because they have always sent in \$2.00. If they come into the office the clerk can tell them to fill out the check for 25 cents less.

Joan Dargie – Town Clerk , Milford

Co-Chair - Legislative Committee for City and Town Clerks

- When they sent this bill out to their members the biggest response they received was that they are already losing money on senior citizen dog licenses.
- The post office requires 85 cents to mail out a tag.
- Taking 85 cents out of \$2.00 or \$1.75 does not leave a lot going back to the towns.
- They believe the fees need to be looked at again and not at all reduced.

TJM

Date Hearing Report completed: April 8, 2024

Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee
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AMENDMENT # 2024-1411s, Fee for the Animal Population Control Program to HB 1626-FN-A, relative to the repeal of certain designated funds and relative to the apportionment of dog license fees.

Hearing Date: April 23, 2024

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Gray, Soucy and Perkins Kwoka

Members of the Committee Absent : Senators Murphy and Abbas

Bill Analysis: This bill repeals certain designated funds and changes dog licensing fees.

Sponsors:

Rep. D. McGuire
Sen. Gray

Rep. Almy

Sen. D'Allesandro

Who supports the amendment: Representative Dan McGuire, Commissioner Shawn Jasper, Kurt Eherberg

Who opposes the amendment: Ruth Lemay, Glen Ring

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Dan McGuire

- He is the sponsor of the bill and is in support of this amendment.
- Veterinarians that are reimbursed by this program perform three different functions.
- Currently, two of them are being reimbursed at 100% and one is being reimbursed at 80%.
- This amendment establishes that all three functions are reimbursed equally at 100%.

Shawn Jasper – Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food

- As he testified before, they have fewer and fewer veterinarians participating in the program.
- They believe some of it, if not all of it is the fee.
- This is a fee that is set by the State Veterinarian and is not a different rate for each participant in the program.
- With this amendment, instead of only getting 80% of the fee they will receive 100%.
- He does not believe that this will negatively impact the fund.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None

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Date Hearing Report completed: April 25, 2024