

Congress Considers Pet Safety and Protection Act

The bill would ensure that cats and dogs used at research facilities are not obtained illegally.

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Congress is considering legislation that would amend the current animal welfare act to ensure that all cats and dogs used in research facilities are obtained legally.

The legislation, commonly known as the 2007 Pet Safety and Protection Act, was introduced in the Senate Feb. 28 by Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI) and in the House March 1 by Rep. Mike Doyle (D-PA).

The legislation would protect pets from unscrupulous dealers and "bunchers" who obtain unclaimed animals from animal shelters, newspaper ads or through illegal means and sell them to test labs.

The 2007 Pet Safety and Protection Act would:

Prohibit "random source" Class B animal dealers and unlicensed individuals from selling cats and dogs to laboratories

Prevent stray animals, which could be lost pets, from being sold to laboratories

Permit breeders (Class A dealers) to supply animals to laboratories

Permit research facilities that breed animals to supply them to other research facilities

Permit registered public pounds that receive animals turned in by their owners to provide these animals to research facilities

Permit individuals to donate their own animals to laboratories for research purposes

The new regulations would take effect 90 days after signed into law. Anyone found breaking the law would be subject to a \$1,000 fine per violation. No votes on the legislation have been scheduled for either chamber of Congress yet.