

## SB 295 - BASIC STANDARDS OF SHELTER AND CARE FOR RESTRAINED DOGS

Texas Health and Safety code, § 821.077, titled “Unlawful Restraint of Dogs”, was created in 2007, to establish requirements for restraining a dog to ensure the safety and health of the animal and community. The Texas Animal Control Association, LEO’s, and prosecutors maintain the law is unenforceable due to confusing language and a mandatory 24-hour warning period that limits an officer’s immediate enforcement of this statute, thereby preventing them from intervening in a critically unsafe situation. SB 295 addresses the following:

### IMPROVEMENTS AND CLARIFICATIONS TO EXISTING LAW:

- **Defines adequate shelter, which citizens are currently mandated to provide but are undefined in statute.** The new definition protects from exposure to extreme temperatures and standing water and must be large enough to allow the dog to stand, turn around, and lie down.
- Requires **access to water**.
- **Doubles the tie-out restraint length to ensure adequate movement.**
- **Prohibits the use of a chain.** Restraint must be attached to a collar or harness properly fitted to the dog. (Chains are #1 cause of unsafe and unlawful conditions.)
- **Strikes the mandatory 24-hour warning period** to allow officers to utilize their discretion to issue citations when situations are unsafe and imminent danger is present.

### PROPOSED CHANGES ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF ALL:

- **Chains are heavy and cause undue pain and injury when they easily tangle leading to aggression in dogs.** Pain and a lack of access to basic care causes dogs to be aggressive. There are many reports of chains breaking and aggressive dog attacks on children.
- **The current tie-out length does not allow for adequate movement, leading to aggression and poor health consequences.**
- **The mandatory 24-hour warning/wait period prevents law enforcement from addressing critical and dangerous situations when they occur,** leading to death, injury and repeat offenders.

**KEY EXEMPTIONS:** The Bill exempts when the dog is with his owner or unattended due to a temporary task such as camping, hunting or fishing, or when the dog is working related to agricultural activities, including when the dog is in a pick-up truck.

**ENDORSEMENTS:** Including but not limited to TX Animal Control Assn., Texas Veterinary Medical Association, TML, TMPA, and Combined Law Enforcement Agencies of Texas (CLEAT).

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