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Bill Analysis
Legislative Service Commission

H.B. 701

123rd General Assembly
(As Introduced)

Reps. Peterson, Goodman, Austria, Trakas, Allen, Hollister, Buehrer, Hoops, Harris, Krupinski, Pringle, Clancy, Flannery, Evans, Terwilleger, Damschroder, A. Core, Taylor

BILL SUMMARY

- Authorizes county auditors to allow for the registration of dogs via the Internet.
- Authorizes county auditors to accept the payment of dog registration fees by credit card, debit card, charge card, or prepaid or stored value cards.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Existing dog registration law

Under current law, generally everyone who owns, keeps, or harbors a dog more than three months of age must annually register the dog with the county auditor. The registration fee is \$2, unless the board of county commissioners sets a higher fee for dogs more than nine months of age that have not been spayed or neutered (with certain exceptions) or unless the board of county commissioners by resolution increases dog and kennel registration fees in an amount estimated to cover necessary expenses for the administration of the Dog Law (R.C. Chapter 955.) and to pay claims allowed for animals injured or destroyed by dogs. If the application for registration is not filed and the required fee paid on or before January 31 or a later date set by the board of county commissioners, the county auditor must assess a penalty in an amount equal to the registration fee, to be paid with that fee. (Secs. 955.01 and 955.14, not in the bill.)

Guide, leader, hearing, or support dogs are exempted from paying a registration fee and, once registered, need not annually renew their registration as long as the dog continues to serve in that capacity (sec. 955.011). Also, a law enforcement agency that owns, keeps, or harbors a law enforcement canine may file a special annual registration application with the county auditor for which no fee is charged (sec. 955.012).

Changes proposed by the bill

The bill permits a county auditor to establish procedures and take actions that are necessary to allow for either or both of the following: (1) dogs to be registered *via the Internet* and (2) the payment of dog registration fees by "financial transaction devices," whether or not the auditor accepts Internet payments. "Financial transaction devices" are *credit cards, debit cards, charge cards, or prepaid or stored value cards.*¹ (Secs. 301.28(A)(1) and 955.013(A)(1) and (B).)

While currently the use of the cards listed above for payments to county officials requires the approval and oversight of the board of county commissioners, under the bill, the county auditor may accept payments made by the those cards for dog registration fees *only*, without that approval or oversight. But, the bill provides that the procedures that the county auditor establishes for payments of dog registration fees by financial transaction devices "may be substantially similar to procedures established by the . . . board of county commissioners for the acceptance of payment of other county expenses by financial transaction devices. . . ." (Secs. 301.28(A)(2) and 955.013(B).)

Those procedures, which again are *not mandatory* for the county auditor to follow in collecting dog registration fees, include advertising the intent to request proposals by newspaper publication, and then requesting proposals from at least three financial institutions, issuers of financial transaction devices, or processors of financial transaction devices, before entering into a contract for the use of the financial transaction devices of any entity submitting a proposal. The board then may establish a surcharge or convenience fee to impose upon persons making payments by approved financial transaction devices if the contract with the associated entity so permits. A notice must be posted in each county office taking payments by approved financial transaction devices clearly showing any surcharge or convenience fee, and a specified written notice also must be provided to each person making a payment by such a device. In addition, a penalty for returned or dishonored payments made by such a device may be imposed. (Sec. 301.28.)

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE	JOURNAL ENTRY
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¹ The "Internet" is defined as the international computer network of both federal and nonfederal interoperable packet switched data networks, including the graphical subnetwork called the World Wide Web (sec. 955.013(A)(2)).

Introduced

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