

**Second Regular Session  
Sixty-fourth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO**

**PREAMENDED**

*This Unofficial Version Includes Committee  
Amendments Not Yet Adopted on Second Reading*

LLS NO. 04-0646.01 Stephen Miller

**HOUSE BILL 04-1279**

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**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**Stafford,** and Rose

**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Hillman,** and Kester

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**House Committees**

Agriculture, Livestock, & Natural Resources  
Appropriations

**Senate Committees**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101 **CONCERNING LIABILITY REGARDING THE BEHAVIOR OF DOGS.**

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**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not necessarily reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted.)*

Specifies that negligence is the primary liability standard in civil actions for bodily injury, serious bodily injury, or death caused to persons by dogs. Defines "bodily injury" and "serious bodily injury". Disregards the viciousness or dangerous propensities of the dog or the dog owner's knowledge thereof. Imposes strict liability in cases in which the dog owner had knowledge of the dog's viciousness or dangerous propensities. Permits a court to enter a euthanasia order in strict liability cases.

Exempts dog owners from liability under certain circumstances. Clarifies the general assembly's intent not to abrogate any provision of the

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
*Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.  
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.*

"Colorado Governmental Immunity Act".

Establishes an affirmative defense to a criminal charge brought under the cruelty to animals statute involving injury or death to a dog that the dog was worrying livestock and was on the property where the livestock were being kept at the time of the dog's injury or death. Prohibits a municipality from adopting a rule or law for the control of dangerous dogs that is specific to breed. Prohibits a county from adopting a resolution for the control of dangerous dogs that is specific to breed.

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1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** Part 1 of article 21 of title 13, Colorado Revised  
3 Statutes, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION to  
4 read:

5 **13-21-122. Civil actions against dog owners.** (1) AS USED IN  
6 THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

7 (a) "BODILY INJURY" MEANS ANY PHYSICAL INJURY THAT RESULTS  
8 IN SEVERE BRUISING, MUSCLE TEARS, OR SKIN LACERATIONS REQUIRING  
9 PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL TREATMENT OR ANY PHYSICAL INJURY THAT  
10 REQUIRES CORRECTIVE OR COSMETIC SURGERY.

11 (b) "DOG" MEANS ANY DOMESTICATED ANIMAL RELATED TO THE  
12 FOX, WOLF, COYOTE, OR JACKAL.

13 (c) "DOG OWNER" MEANS A PERSON, FIRM, CORPORATION, OR  
14 ORGANIZATION OWNING, POSSESSING, HARBORING, KEEPING, HAVING  
15 FINANCIAL OR PROPERTY INTEREST IN, OR HAVING CONTROL OR CUSTODY  
16 OF, A DOG.

17 (d) "SERIOUS BODILY INJURY" HAS THE SAME MEANING AS SET  
18 FORTH IN SECTION 18-1-901 (3) (p), C.R.S.

19 (2) EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS  
20 SECTION, A PERSON OR A PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF A PERSON WHO

1 SUFFERS BODILY INJURY, SERIOUS BODILY INJURY, OR DEATH FROM BEING  
2 BITTEN BY A DOG WHILE LAWFULLY ON PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROPERTY AS  
3 A RESULT OF THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE DOG OWNER SHALL BE ENTITLED TO  
4 BRING A CIVIL ACTION TO RECOVER DAMAGES AGAINST THE DOG OWNER  
5 REGARDLESS OF THE VICIOUSNESS OR DANGEROUS PROPENSITIES OF THE  
6 DOG OR THE DOG OWNER'S KNOWLEDGE OR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE  
7 DOG'S VICIOUSNESS OR DANGEROUS PROPENSITIES.

8 (3) (a) IN ANY CASE DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION  
9 IN WHICH IT IS ALLEGED AND PROVED THAT THE DOG OWNER HAD  
10 KNOWLEDGE OR NOTICE OF THE DOG'S VICIOUSNESS OR DANGEROUS  
11 PROPENSITIES:

12 (I) THE REQUIREMENT OF NEGLIGENCE SHALL NOT APPLY AND THE  
13 DOG OWNER SHALL BE LIABLE TO THE VICTIM OR VICTIM'S ESTATE FOR THE  
14 VICTIM'S PRESENT AND FUTURE COSTS OF MEDICAL CARE THAT WERE OR  
15 WILL BE INCURRED AS A RESULT OF THE DOG BITING INCIDENT THAT IS THE  
16 SUBJECT OF THE CIVIL ACTION; AND

17 (II) THE COURT, UPON A MOTION MADE BY THE VICTIM OR THE  
18 PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE VICTIM, MAY ENTER AN ORDER THAT  
19 THE DOG BE EUTHANIZED BY A LICENSED VETERINARIAN OR LICENSED  
20 SHELTER AT THE EXPENSE OF THE DOG OWNER.

21 (b) THE VICTIM OR VICTIM'S ESTATE MAY RECOVER DAMAGES NOT  
22 DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH (a) OF THIS SUBSECTION (3) BY PROCEEDING IN  
23 ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION.

24 (4) FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, A PERSON SHALL BE DEEMED  
25 TO BE LAWFULLY ON PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROPERTY IF HE OR SHE IS IN THE  
26 PERFORMANCE OF A DUTY IMPOSED UPON HIM OR HER BY LOCAL, STATE OR  
27 FEDERAL LAWS OR REGULATIONS OR IF HE OR SHE IS ON PROPERTY UPON

1 EXPRESS OR IMPLIED INVITATION OF THE OWNER OF THE PROPERTY OR IS  
2 ON HIS OR HER OWN PROPERTY.

3 (5) A DOG OWNER SHALL NOT BE LIABLE TO A PERSON WHO  
4 SUFFERS BODILY INJURY, SERIOUS BODILY INJURY, OR DEATH FROM BEING  
5 BITTEN BY THE DOG:

6 (a) WHILE THE PERSON IS UNLAWFULLY ON PUBLIC OR PRIVATE  
7 PROPERTY;

8 (b) WHILE THE PERSON IS ON PROPERTY OF THE DOG OWNER AND  
9 THE PROPERTY IS CLEARLY AND CONSPICUOUSLY MARKED WITH ONE OR  
10 MORE POSTED SIGNS STATING "NO TRESPASSING" OR "BEWARE OF DOG";

11 (c) WHILE THE DOG IS BEING USED BY A PEACE OFFICER OR  
12 MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THE PERFORMANCE OF PEACE OFFICER OR  
13 MILITARY PERSONNEL DUTIES;

14 (d) AS A RESULT OF THE PERSON KNOWINGLY PROVOKING THE  
15 DOG;

16 (e) IF THE PERSON IS A VETERINARY HEALTH CARE WORKER, DOG  
17 GROOMER, HUMANE AGENCY STAFF PERSON, PROFESSIONAL DOG HANDLER,  
18 TRAINER, OR DOG SHOW JUDGE ACTING IN THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS OR  
19 HER RESPECTIVE DUTIES; OR

20 (f) WHILE THE DOG IS WORKING AS A HUNTING DOG, HERDING DOG,  
21 OR PREDATOR CONTROL DOG ON THE PROPERTY OF OR UNDER THE  
22 CONTROL OF THE DOG'S OWNER.

23 (6) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL BE CONSTRUED TO:

24 (a) AFFECT ANY OTHER CAUSE OF ACTION PREDICATED ON  
25 NEGLIGENCE, INTENTIONAL TORT, OUTRAGEOUS CONDUCT, OR OTHER  
26 THEORIES;

27 (b) AFFECT THE PROVISIONS OF ANY OTHER CRIMINAL OR CIVIL

1 STATUTE GOVERNING THE REGULATION OF DOGS; OR

2 (c) ABROGATE ANY PROVISION OF THE "COLORADO  
3 GOVERNMENTAL IMMUNITY ACT", ARTICLE 10 OF TITLE 24, C.R.S.

4 **SECTION 2.** 18-9-204.5 (1) and (5), Colorado Revised Statutes,  
5 are amended to read:

6 **18-9-204.5. Unlawful ownership of dangerous dog.** (1) The  
7 general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that:

8 (a) Dangerous dogs are a serious and widespread threat to the  
9 safety and welfare of citizens throughout the state because of the number  
10 and serious nature of attacks by such dogs; AND

11 (b) THE REGULATION AND CONTROL OF DANGEROUS DOGS IS A  
12 MATTER OF STATEWIDE CONCERN.

13 (5) (a) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a  
14 municipality from adopting any rule or law for the control of dangerous  
15 dogs; EXCEPT THAT ANY SUCH RULE OR LAW SHALL NOT REGULATE  
16 DANGEROUS DOGS IN A MANNER THAT IS SPECIFIC TO BREED.

17 (b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to abrogate a  
18 county's authority under part 1 of article 15 of title 30, C.R.S., to adopt  
19 dog control and licensing resolutions and to impose the penalties set forth  
20 in section 30-15-102, C.R.S.; EXCEPT THAT ANY SUCH RESOLUTION SHALL  
21 NOT REGULATE DANGEROUS DOGS IN A MANNER THAT IS SPECIFIC TO  
22 BREED.

23 **SECTION 3. Effective date - applicability.** This act shall take  
24 effect July 1, 2004, and shall apply to offenses, acts, and omissions  
25 committed on or after said date.

26 **SECTION 4. Safety clause.** The general assembly hereby finds,

- 1 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
- 2 preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.