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H.B. 145
133rd General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for H.B. 145's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Rep. Brinkman

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The Office of the Attorney General will incur one-time costs to establish, and ongoing costs to maintain, an animal abuser registry. If work for the registry is incorporated into the current contract with the vendor operating its existing sex offender, arson, and violent offender registries/databases, costs could range between \$50,000 and \$100,000 the first year, and up to \$15,000 to \$20,000 annually thereafter.
- The required \$10 offender registration fee may offset to some degree the Attorney General's costs noted in the preceding dot point. The court is required to collect the fee from the offender and forward it for crediting to the Animal Abuser Registration Fund, which is created by the bill.
- The bill's notification and fee collection requirements will generate additional work for common pleas, municipal, and county courts and related clerk of court operations that likely can be handled with existing staff and resources.

Detailed Analysis

The bill requires the Attorney General to establish and maintain a registry of violations of specified animal abuse offenses. Information regarding an offense will generally remain in the registry for two years, if the offender has not been convicted of or pleaded guilty to another animal abuse offense during that period.¹ The bill also requires the court that sentences an individual who is convicted or pleads guilty to one of these violations to submit specified

¹ Information regarding each subsequent offense will be maintained in the registry for five years.

information to the Attorney General, and to collect and forward to the Attorney General a fee of \$10 from the offender for deposit in the Animal Abuse Registration Fund created by the bill.

Attorney General

The Office of the Attorney General will experience initial one-time costs to establish, and ongoing costs to maintain, an animal abuser registry. The registry could be designed and maintained by Watch Systems, the vendor that currently contracts with the Attorney General to operate the sex offender, arson, and violent offender databases/registries. For that purpose, in FY 2021, the Attorney General is contracted to pay Watch Systems no more than \$608,821. The cost of renewing the agreement with an amendment expanding the contract's scope will depend on the work involved to develop and implement the animal abuser registry, but will likely range between \$50,000 and \$100,000.² The ongoing cost to maintain the registry may range up to \$15,000 to \$20,000 annually thereafter. Some portion of these costs will be offset by the money deposited to the credit of the Animal Abuser Registration Fund, which the bill requires to be used by the Attorney General to administer the registry.

While no statewide tabulation of annual convictions of animal abuse offenses is readily available, one can estimate that number to be roughly 1,140 per year based on an extrapolation from court records for Franklin County. The Franklin County Municipal Court Annual Report provides the number of animal abandonment and neglect/cruelty charges filed countywide each year. According to this source, between 2010 and 2019, the average number of charges filed annually in Franklin County for violations of these offenses under the Revised Code was about 87. If violations of municipal ordinances similar to the violations under the Revised Code are included, the average number of charges filed annually in Franklin County for animal abuse violations rises to about 114. With roughly 10% of the state's population, if the rate of animal abuse charges in Franklin County holds across all Ohio counties, then one can estimate the number of such charges filed annually to be between approximately 870 and 1,140 statewide, with the number of actual convictions likely lower.

Courts

Common pleas, municipal, and county courts and related clerk of court operations will incur additional work to submit offender information and fees to the Attorney General, and to notify the Attorney General of a sealed record that must be removed from the registry. Any additional work will likely be handled with existing staff and resources based on the expected relative infrequency of animal abuse convictions.

Humane societies and dog pounds

An animal shelter, defined as a county-operated humane society or dog pound, is barred from placing an animal with a person listed on the registry. There is unlikely to be any noticeable ongoing costs for animal shelters to comply with this prohibition.

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² The additional costs to establish the violent offender and arson databases/registries were \$100,000 in FY 2019 and \$50,000 in FY 2013, respectively.