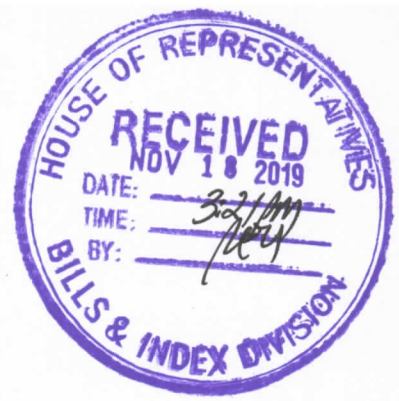


Republic of the Philippines  
House of Representatives  
Quezon City

Eighteenth Congress  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5521



---

Introduced by **Hon. Danilo Ramon S. Fernandez**  
1<sup>st</sup> District, Laguna

---

### EXPLANATORY NOTE

The objectives of this proposed Responsible Dog Ownership Act of 2020 are: (1) to encourage responsible dog ownership; (2) to protect public health [against incidence of dog bites and maulings; (3) to reduce environmental nuisance [against dog excrement, barking and property damage]; and (4) to promote the effective management of dog population [through mandatory spaying or neutering].

Section 10 of Republic Act No. 9482, otherwise known as the "Anti-Rabies Act of 2007", states "there is the need to control the Dog population and minimize the number of unwanted Stray Dogs."

Health authorities have declared that rabies continues to be a public health problem in the Philippines. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Western Pacific Region, the Philippines is one of the top 10 countries with rabies problem. On the other hand, the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine stated that the incidence of rabies in the country is estimated to be 6-8 per million populations, one of the highest worldwide.

The online portal World Atlas indicated that the Philippines ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the world in the incidence of human deaths related to rabies. Specifically, the Department of Health (DoH) estimated that approximately 300 to 600 Filipinos die of rabies every year. It clarified that the most affected by rabies in the country are children five to 14 years old, or 53 percent of all cases.

If we consider incidents of animal bites, without specific reference to whether the animal involved was rabid or not, we would find the relevant statistics to be staggering. The number of animal bite victims was barely 200,000 in 2007 [when the Anti-Rabies Act took effect]. In 2008, the figure reached about 200,000. In 2012, the number increased by 200 percent to 400,000, and sharply climbed to nearly 700,000

in 2014, before peaking to 1.085 million in 2016. No figures for 2017, as yet, have been made available.


While it is true that rabies is transmitted not only by dogs but also by cats, rats, and other infected animals, studies have shown that dogs remain the principal cause of animal bites and rabies cases (WHO, Western Pacific Region). Specifically, more than 90 percent of rabies cases in the Philippines are caused by bites from dogs (DoH).

Further, there seems to be a correlation between the high incidence of rabies, animal bites and the deaths and injuries resulting therefrom with the high population of dogs in the country. The top 10 countries with the most number of dogs worldwide are: USA (75.8 million), Brazil (35.7 million), China (27.4 million), Russia (15.0 million), Japan (12.0 million), the Philippines (11.6 million), India (10.2 million), Argentina (9.2 million), France (7.4 million), and Romania (4.1 million).

Commenting on the increase in the number of human rabies cases in the Philippines, Mr. Arthur Dessi Roman, an infectious diseases and medical specialist at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (also a consultant at the Manila Doctors Hospital and Philippine General Hospital, and a board member of the Philippine Society for Microbiology), has recommended that it would help if both pets and stray animals are spayed or neutered.

Several foreign jurisdictions have been moving towards the direction of limiting the number of dogs/pets an individual could own. In the United States, Rhode Island, Texas, Minnesota and California, among others, have allowed their local units – counties/ boroughs – to adopt strict ownership rules. In Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia have specific dog ownership limitation laws.

In view of the compelling social need to protect public health and reduce environmental nuisance, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



**Danilo Ramon S. Fernandez**  
1<sup>st</sup> District, Laguna



Republic of the Philippines  
House of Representatives  
Quezon City

Eighteenth Congress  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **5521**

---

Introduced by **Hon. Danilo Ramon S. Fernandez**  
1<sup>st</sup> District, Laguna

---

**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING  
RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP IN THE PHILIPPINES**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled*

**SECTION 1. Short Title.** - This Act Shall be known as the "*Responsible Dog Ownership Act of 2020*".

**SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is the policy of the State to protect the health, safety and general welfare of the people, and reduce environmental nuisance. Towards these ends, a system of responsible dog ownership is hereby instituted, through mandatory spaying or neutering of pet dogs.

**SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** - For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

(a) *Concerned officials* refers to the animal control officer of the city, town or province;

(b) *Dog* refers to a common quadruped domestic animal belonging to the order *carnivora* (male or female), scientifically known as *canis familiaris*;

(c) *Impound* refers to seize and hold in the custody of the law;

(d) *Owner* refers to any person keeping, harboring or having charge, care or control of a Dog, including his/her representative. Any person providing care or sustenance to any dog or permitting the same to habitually be or remain on or be lodged or fed within such person's house, yard or premises for an uninterrupted period of thirty (30) days or longer shall be deemed the owner of such a dog and shall adhere to the provisions of this Act;

(e) *Pet therapy animal* refers to any animal, usually a dog, that provides affection and comfort to people in hospitals, retirement homes, nursing homes, hospices, disaster areas, and to people with learning difficulties;

(f) *Pound* refers to a public enclosure for stray animals;

(g) *Service animal* refers to any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability; and

(h) *Spaying or neutering* includes performing a vasectomy or tubal ligation on the dog by a registered veterinarian.

**SEC. 4. *Mandatory Spaying or Neutering of Dogs.*** – It shall be unlawful for any person to own, keep or harbor a dog which is six (6) months of age or older on any lot, premises, dwelling, building, structure, boat or living accommodation, unless it has been spayed or neutered as certified by a licensed veterinarian.

Upon being formally notified of the violation, the erring owner shall be given an extension period of not more than thirty (30) days within which to comply, otherwise, the pet dog shall be impounded at the city or municipal pound, and which shall not be released to the owner unless it has been spayed or neutered at the owner's expense.

**SEC. 5. *Right of Entry.*** – For purposes of enforcing the provisions of this Act, the concerned officials are empowered to enter upon any premises upon which a dog is kept and to demand the exhibition of such animal by the owner and the appropriate permits or certificates for such animal. They are also authorized to seize and impound the dog the ownership or possession of which is found in violation of this Act.

**SEC. 6. *Exemptions.*** – This Act shall not apply to the following:

- (a) Owners who hold a breeding permit issued by the relevant government authority;
- (b) Operators of dog rescue facilities or animal welfare organization, as far as the animals found therein;
- (c) When a licensed veterinarian certifies that due to the age, health or illness of the dog, it would be inappropriate to spay or neuter the same, as it would pose an undue risk to the health of the animal or adversely affect its growth, development or wellbeing;

- (d) Owners, as well as the beneficiaries of service or assistance dogs and pet therapy animals;
- (e) Owners / operators of veterinarian clinics or animal hospitals, under whose custody dogs have been left for care and treatment;
- (f) Government entities which train dogs for law enforcement work; and
- (g) Non-resident aliens owning or possessing a dog which is not kept within the country for more than thirty (30) days, provided such dogs shall at all times while in the country are kept within a building, enclosure or vehicle, or are under restraint by the owner.

**SEC. 6. *Penalties.*** – Pet owners who fail or refuse to have their dog spayed or neutered shall be punished by a fine of One Thousand Pesos P1,000.00. All proceeds from this section shall be deposited in the city or town's spay/neuter account.

**SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.*** - All law, executive orders, rules and regulations or any part hereof inconsistent herewith are deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.*** - If any part or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional and invalid, such 18 declaration shall not invalidate other parts thereof which shall remain in full force and effect.

**SEC. 9. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.