
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 1446 (File 776, as amended by Senate "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING ROAMING DOGS.

SUMMARY

This bill increases the penalty for dog owners or keepers who allow their dogs to roam at large on another's land or on a public highway when not under their control.

Under current law, this is an infraction. The bill instead generally makes it punishable by a fine of up to \$350 for a first violation and a fine of up to \$500 for a subsequent violation. People fined for these violations must follow the law's procedure for infractions. For example, they can pay the fine by mail without making a court appearance.

Under the bill, however, a third or subsequent violation occurring within one year after the immediate prior violation is a class C misdemeanor, which is punishable by a fine of up to \$500, up to three months in prison, or both.

By law, the unauthorized presence of a dog on another's land or a public highway when not under its owner's or keeper's control is prima facie evidence of a violation.

The bill also makes technical changes.

*Senate Amendment "A" (1) makes the misdemeanor penalty only applicable to third or subsequent violations occurring within a one-year period and (2) applies the infraction procedure to the non-misdemeanor fines.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

BACKGROUND

Infractions

Infractions are punishable by fines, usually set by Superior Court judges, of between \$35 and \$90, plus a \$20 or \$35 surcharge and an additional fee based on the fine's amount. There may be other added charges depending upon the type of infraction. For example, certain motor vehicle infractions trigger a Special Transportation Fund surcharge of 50% of the fine. An infraction is not a crime, and violators can generally pay the fine by mail without making a court appearance.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 39 Nay 0 (04/10/2025)