

CHAPTER 424

(House Bill 1328)

AN ACT concerning

Abandoned Animals – Veterinarian’s and Commercial Kennel Operator’s Rights

FOR the purpose of clarifying when the owner of an animal that was given to the custody of a veterinarian or a commercial kennel operator is deemed to have forfeited title to the animal.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Commercial Law

Section 16-701

Annotated Code of Maryland

(1990 Replacement Volume and 1993 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Commercial Law

16-701.

(a) (1) If a qualified veterinarian, as defined in the Agriculture Article, or a commercial boarding kennel operator gives care or custody to any animal or performs medical or other services necessary and incidental to their professions to any animal under care or custody, the veterinarian or commercial boarding kennel operator may notify the owner after the animal is ready for delivery that the animal is ready.

(2) Notice may be given in person or by registered or certified mail or, if the owner’s address is unknown, by posting the notice for 10 days on the door of the courthouse or on a bulletin board in the immediate vicinity of the courthouse of the county where the animal is located.

(b) If the animal is not claimed AND TAKEN BY THE OWNER FROM THE VETERINARIAN OR THE BOARDING KENNEL within 10 days of the date the notice is given or posted, the owner forfeits his title to the animal and the veterinarian or the commercial boarding kennel operator may:

(1) Sell the animal at public sale, except for purposes of experimentation or vivisection;

(2) Turn the animal over to an animal welfare agency serving the county in which the animal is located or, if there is no animal welfare agency in that county, to the nearest animal welfare agency; or

(3) Turn the animal over to a responsible private individual in the county.