

Talking points – IL SB 3264 – Dangerous Animals Act – Permit

Liability insurance requirements would be set at \$100,000 per animal, up to \$1,000,000 – this is an excessive amount, and doesn't take into consideration that many of these species do not pose a measurable risk to the general public.

This bill would give law enforcement officers with the courts full power to classify any individual animal as a "dangerous animal", even those which are not members of the species named previously. With this wording, it is possible that individual members of various common domestic species, such as dogs, may be so designated.

Since the permitted owner is barred from selling or bartering such an animal, should the time come when he or she can no longer provide it with the necessary care, transfer of ownership to another responsible and knowledgeable owner might be prohibited, and the animal's continued welfare would be jeopardized.

Since a large number of these species to be newly regulated are currently owned by individuals throughout Illinois, it is questionable what will happen to these animals now owned if their owners cannot afford the yearly permit fee (\$250) and liability insurance (up to \$1,000,000), or do not wish to subject their private residences to inspection as part of the permitting process.

In addition to excessive regulation of exotic species, this bill gives the employees or agents of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources full access at "all reasonable times" to the premises where these animals are housed; should this be in a private residence, this might constitute a major invasion of privacy for that animal owner.

This bill authorizes the formation of a new 7-member Dangerous Animal Advisory Committee, of which three (one each from the Division of Wildlife Resources, the Division of Fisheries, and the Division of Natural Heritage) are from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and a fourth individual from the Illinois Department of Agriculture. This Committee would assist in reviewing the list of Dangerous Species and making additions. There is no funding mechanism in place in this bill to assist in the operation of this Committee, and – given that both the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Department of Agriculture are currently understaffed and underfunded – it is questionable if either Department would have the personnel hours available to assist with the duties of this Committee. Finally, this Committee does not contain any individual who is either an expert in the care of exotic species, nor from the pet trade where such species have been sold or exchanged, and therefore lacks expertise on the subject.

Enforcement of this law would most likely be by local police officers. Given that many municipal police departments have faced major budgetary cuts in recent years and are already understaffed, it is doubtful that they should be expected to enforce laws regulating animals kept securely inside a private dwelling, such as many of those included in this bill would be.

This bill would give the Illinois Department of Agriculture full discretion to enact a ban on ownership, without the permit, on any and all members of the Boidae (Boa) Snake Family, including "boas, pythons, and anacondas". This large group includes at least several harmless snake species, frequently kept as pets by amateur snake fanciers and sold in the pet trade, such as the Ball Python (*Python regius*). Many

others animals on the long list of prohibited species simply do not pose a measurable risk to the community.

This bill is so broadly encompassing that it would prohibit and criminalize the “harboring” of at least several common and medically insignificant invertebrate species, unless the homeowner obtained a permit, such as the common house centipede (*Scutigera coleoptrata*) and the small triangulate cobweb spider (*Steatoda triangulosa*), both which are regular and harmless denizens of Illinois basements and cellars.