STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

A N   A C T

RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Introduced By: Senators Ruggerio, Sosnowski, Walaska, McCaffrey, and Bates

Date Introduced: January 24, 2012

Referred To: Senate Environment & Agriculture

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 4-1 of the General Laws entitled “Cruelty to Animals” is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

4-1-6.1. Operating upon tails of bovines prohibited. -- (a) Any person who intentionally cuts or alters the bone, tissues, muscles or tendons of the tail of any bovine or otherwise operates upon it in any manner for the purpose or with the effect of docking, setting, or otherwise altering the natural carriage of the tail, or who knowingly permits the same to be done upon the premises of which he or she is the owner, lessee, proprietor or user, or who assists in or is voluntarily present at such cutting or alteration, is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment for not more than one year, or by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars ($500), or both. If any bovine is found with the bone, tissues, muscles or tendons of its tail cut or altered as aforesaid upon the premises or in the charge and custody of any person, and the wound resulting therefrom is unhealed, such fact may be evidence of a violation of this section by the owner or user of such premises, or the person having such charge or custody.

(b) The provisions of subsection (a) of this section shall not apply to tail docking performed by a veterinarian for veterinary purposes, provided that the procedure is performed under the following conditions:

(1) The animal has been adequately anesthetized to minimize the animal’s pain and suffering during the treatment or operation.

(2) The procedure is done in a way that minimizes the long-term pain and suffering
resulting from the procedure.

(3) The veterinarian uses suitable instruments.

(4) The procedure is done under hygienic conditions.

(c) The owner of any bovine with a docked tail who purchased the bovine in a state where tail docking is legal shall be exempt from prosecution under this section.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.
EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
AN ACT
RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

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This act would prohibit the docking and altering of the tails of bovines except under certain conditions.

This act would take effect upon passage.