

As Introduced

136th General Assembly

Regular Session

2025-2026

H. B. No. 676

Representatives Thomas, D., Creech

Cosponsor: Representative Newman

To amend sections 955.01, 955.024, and 955.11 and
to enact sections 305.87, 955.025, 955.111, and
955.25 of the Revised Code to establish
regulations regarding wolfdog hybrids and to
allow a board of county commissioners to abate
certain animal nuisances.

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BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That sections 955.01, 955.024, and 955.11 be
amended and sections 305.87, 955.025, 955.111, and 955.25 of the
Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

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Sec. 305.87. (A) As used in this section, "animal" means
an animal that is legally seized or disposed of and such seizure
or disposal is or becomes the financial responsibility of a
board of county commissioners.

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(B) A board of county commissioners may provide for the
abatement, control, or removal of one or more animals from land
in the county if the board determines that the maintenance of or
lack of care of the animal constitutes a nuisance. The board may
employ the necessary labor, materials, and equipment to perform
such action.

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(C) A board of county commissioners may recoup the costs 20
incurred by the board in performing actions under division (B) 21
of this section from the owner of land upon which the animal or 22
animals were primarily kept in accordance with the process 23
prescribed in division (D) of this section. 24

(D) (1) Except as provided in division (D) (2) of this 25
section, at least seven days before providing for the abatement, 26
control, or removal of any animal, the board of county 27
commissioners shall notify the landowner and any holders of 28
liens of record upon the property of both of the following: 29

(a) That the owner is ordered to abate, control, or remove 30
the animal or animals because the maintenance or care of the 31
animal or animals have been determined by the board to be a 32
nuisance. 33

(b) If the animal or animals are not abated, controlled, 34
or removed, or if provision for abatement, control, or removal 35
is not made, within seven days, that the board shall provide for 36
such abatement, control, or removal, and that any costs incurred 37
by the board in performing that task shall be entered upon the 38
tax list and become a lien upon the land upon which the animal 39
or animals were kept from the date of entry. 40

(2) If the board of county commissioners provide for or 41
are financially responsible for the abatement, control, or 42
removal of an animal or animals and such action was done in an 43
emergency situation, the board shall so notify the owner of the 44
land upon which the animal or animals were kept and any holders 45
of liens of record upon the land of the abatement, control, or 46
removal and that the costs incurred by the board in performing 47
that action shall be entered upon the tax list and become a lien 48
upon the land from the date of entry. 49

(E) The board shall send the notice to the owner of the 50
land by certified mail if the owner is a resident of the county 51
or is a nonresident whose address is known, and by certified 52
mail to lienholders of record; alternatively, if the owner is a 53
resident of the county or is a nonresident whose address is 54
known, the board may give notice to the owner by causing any of 55
its agents or employees to post the notice on the principal 56
structure on the land and to photograph that posted notice with 57
a camera capable of recording the date of the photograph on it. 58
If the owner's address is unknown and cannot reasonably be 59
obtained, it is sufficient to publish the notice once using at 60
least one of the following methods: 61

(1) In the print or digital edition of a newspaper of 62
general circulation in the county; 63

(2) On the official public notice web site established 64
under section 125.182 of the Revised Code; 65

(3) On the web site and social media account of the 66
county. 67

(F) All costs incurred as authorized under this section 68
shall be paid out of the county general fund from money not 69
otherwise appropriated, except that if the costs incurred exceed 70
five hundred dollars, the board may borrow money from a 71
financial institution to pay for the costs in whole or in part. 72

(G) If a board of county commissioners proceeds under 73
division (D) of this section, the board shall make a written 74
report to the applicable county auditor of the board's action 75
under this section. The board shall include in the report a 76
legal description of the premises and a statement of all costs 77
incurred in providing for the abatement, control, or removal of 78

any animals as provided in this section, including the board's 79
charges for its services, the costs incurred in providing 80
notice, any fees or interest paid to borrow money, and the 81
amount paid for labor, materials, and equipment. The county 82
auditor shall place the costs upon the tax list. The costs are a 83
lien upon the land from and after the date of the entry and 84
shall be collected in the same manner as taxes on real property. 85
The county treasurer shall provide for payment of any collected 86
costs to the general fund of the county that filed the report 87
under this division. 88

Sec. 955.01. As used in this chapter: 89

(A) "Vicious dog" means a dog that has been designated as 90
such in accordance with section 955.23 of the Revised Code or a 91
dog that has previously engaged in a vicious dog act when 92
evidence of such engagement is presented to a court and the 93
court determines that the dog has engaged in a previous vicious 94
dog act. 95

(B) "Dangerous dog" means a dog that has been designated 96
as such in accordance with section 955.23 of the Revised Code or 97
a dog that has previously engaged in a dangerous dog act when 98
evidence of such engagement is presented to a court and the 99
court determines that the dog has engaged in a previous 100
dangerous dog act. 101

(C) "Nuisance dog" means a dog that has been designated as 102
such in accordance with section 955.23 of the Revised Code or a 103
dog that has previously engaged in a nuisance dog act when 104
evidence of such engagement is presented to a court and the 105
court determines that the dog has engaged in a previous nuisance 106
dog act. 107

(D) "Nuisance dog act," "dangerous dog act," and "vicious dog act" have the same meanings as in section 955.22 of the Revised Code.

(E) "Police dog" means a dog that has been trained, and may be used, to assist one or more law enforcement officers in the performance of their official duties.

(F) "Dog kennel" or "kennel" means an establishment that keeps, houses, and maintains adult dogs, as defined in section 956.01 of the Revised Code, for the purpose of breeding the dogs for a fee or other consideration received through a sale, exchange, or lease and that is not a high volume breeder licensed under Chapter 956. of the Revised Code.

(G) "First generation wolfdog" means the offspring of the reproduction between a wolf with a domestic dog.

(H) (1) "Wolfdog hybrid" means any of the following:

(a) A first generation wolfdog;

(b) The offspring of the reproduction between any of the following:

(i) A first generation wolfdog with a wolf;

(ii) A first generation wolfdog with a domestic dog;

(iii) A first generation wolfdog with a first generation wolfdog.

(c) An animal that is advertised or otherwise described or represented as a wolfdog hybrid by its owner.

(2) For purposes of this chapter, references to a "dog" include a "wolfdog hybrid."

Sec. 955.024. (A) Whenever a county auditor registers a

dangerous or vicious dog or receives a notification regarding an 135
address change from an owner, keeper, or harbinger of a dangerous 136
or vicious dog, the county auditor shall notify in writing the 137
applicable county dog warden of such registration or address 138
change. 139

(B) Whenever a county auditor registers a wolfdog hybrid 140
or receives a notification regarding an address change from an 141
owner, keeper, or harbinger of a wolfdog hybrid, the county 142
auditor shall notify in writing the applicable county dog warden 143
of such registration or address change. 144

Sec. 955.025. (A) (1) In addition to obtaining a dog 145
registration in accordance with division (A) of section 955.02 146
of the Revised Code, every person who is the owner, keeper, or 147
harbinger of a wolfdog hybrid shall apply for a wolfdog hybrid 148
registration to the county auditor and submit all of the 149
following to the county auditor: 150

(a) A fee of one hundred dollars; 151

(b) The person's address, telephone number, and other 152
appropriate means for the county auditor to contact the person, 153
along with proof that the person is eighteen years of age or 154
older; 155

(c) With respect to the person and the wolfdog hybrid for 156
which the wolfdog hybrid registration is required, all of the 157
following: 158

(i) Either satisfactory evidence of the fact that the 159
wolfdog hybrid has been neutered or spayed or a statement from a 160
licensed veterinarian that neutering or spaying of the wolfdog 161
hybrid is medically contraindicated; 162

(ii) Satisfactory evidence of the fact that the person has 163

posted and will continue to post clearly visible signs at the 164
person's residence warning both minors and adults of the 165
presence of a wolfdog hybrid on the property; 166

(iii) Satisfactory evidence of the fact that the wolfdog 167
hybrid has been permanently identified by means of a microchip 168
and the wolfdog hybrid's microchip number. 169

(2) The person shall renew the wolfdog hybrid registration 170
annually for the same fee and in the same manner as the initial 171
registration was obtained. 172

(3) If a wolfdog hybrid registration holder relocates to a 173
new county, the holder shall follow the procedure in division 174
(C) of this section and, upon the expiration of the registration 175
issued in the original county, shall renew the registration in 176
the new county. 177

(B) Upon submission in accordance with division (A) of 178
this section, the county shall issue a wolfdog hybrid 179
registration to the person. The county auditor also shall 180
provide the owner with a uniformly designed tag that identifies 181
the animal as a wolfdog hybrid. 182

(C) (1) If the owner of a wolfdog hybrid for whom a wolfdog 183
hybrid registration has previously been obtained relocates to a 184
new address within the same county, the owner shall provide 185
notice of the new address to the county auditor within ten days 186
of relocating to the new address. 187

(2) If the owner of a wolfdog hybrid for whom a wolfdog 188
hybrid registration has previously been obtained relocates to a 189
new address within another county, the owner shall do both of 190
the following within ten days of relocating to the new address: 191

(a) Provide written notice of the new address and a copy 192

of the original wolfdog hybrid registration to the county 193
auditor of the new county; 194

(b) Provide written notice of the new address to the 195
county auditor of the county where the owner previously resided. 196

(D) An animal shelter that keeps or harbors a wolfdog 197
hybrid more than three months of age is exempt from any 198
registration requirements imposed under this section if it is a 199
nonprofit organization that is exempt from federal income 200
taxation under subsection 501(a) and described in subsection 201
501(c)(3) of the "Internal Revenue Code of 1986," 26 U.S.C 202
501(c)(3). 203

(E) No owner, keeper, or harborer of a wolfdog hybrid 204
shall fail to present a valid wolfdog hybrid registration upon 205
request of any law enforcement officer, dog warden, or public 206
health official charged with enforcing this section. A violation 207
of this division is a strict liability offense and section 208
2901.20 of the Revised Code does not apply. 209

(F) No owner, keeper, or harborer of a wolfdog hybrid 210
shall fail to do any of the following: 211

(1) Obtain a wolfdog hybrid registration from the county 212
auditor pursuant to this section; 213

(2) Affix a tag that identifies the wolfdog hybrid as a 214
wolfdog hybrid to the wolfdog hybrid's collar; 215

(3) Ensure that the wolfdog hybrid wears the collar and 216
tag at all times. 217

A violation of division (F) of this section is a strict 218
liability offense and section 2901.20 of the Revised Code does 219
not apply. 220

(G) (1) Whoever violates division (E) of this section is 221
guilty of a minor misdemeanor. 222

(2) Whoever violates division (F) of this section is 223
guilty of a misdemeanor of the fourth degree and a misdemeanor 224
of the third degree on each subsequent offense. 225

Sec. 955.11. (A) Upon the transfer of ownership of any 226
dog, the seller of the dog shall give the buyer a transfer of 227
ownership certificate that shall be signed by the seller. The 228
certificate shall contain the registration number of the dog, 229
the name of the seller, and a brief description of the dog. 230
Blank forms of the certificate may be obtained from the county 231
auditor. A transfer of ownership shall be recorded by the 232
auditor upon presentation of a transfer of ownership certificate 233
that is signed by the former owner of a dog and that is 234
accompanied by a fee of five dollars. 235

(B) Except as provided in division (C) of this section or 236
section 955.111 of the Revised Code, prior to the transfer of 237
ownership or possession of a dog, upon the buyer's or other 238
transferee's request, the seller or other transferor of the dog 239
shall give to the person a written notice relative to the 240
behavior and propensities of the dog. 241

(C) Within ten days after the transfer of ownership or 242
possession of any dog, if the seller or other transferor of the 243
dog has knowledge that the dog is a dangerous dog or vicious 244
dog, the seller or other transferor shall give to the buyer or 245
other transferee, the board of health for the district in which 246
the buyer or other transferee resides, and the dog warden of the 247
county in which the buyer or other transferee resides, a 248
completed copy of a written form on which the seller shall 249
furnish the following information: 250

(1) The name and address of the buyer or other transferee 251
of the dog; 252

(2) The age, sex, color, breed, and current registration 253
number of the dog. 254

In addition, the seller shall answer the following 255
questions, which shall be specifically stated on the form as 256
follows: 257

"Has the dog ever chased or attempted to attack or bite a 258
person? If yes, describe the incident(s) in which the behavior 259
occurred." 260

"Has the dog ever bitten a person? If yes, describe the 261
incident(s) in which the behavior occurred." 262

"Has the dog ever seriously injured or killed a person? If 263
yes, describe the incident(s) in which the behavior occurred." 264

"Has the dog previously been designated a nuisance, 265
dangerous, or vicious dog? If yes, indicate the designation that 266
was assigned, the date of designation, and in which county or 267
city the designation was made." 268

The seller or other transferor shall obtain the signature 269
of the buyer or other transferee after a statement on the form 270
that the buyer or other transferee understands that such person 271
is acquiring a dangerous or vicious dog. 272

The dog warden of the county in which the seller resides 273
shall furnish the form to the seller at no cost. 274

(D) (1) No seller or other transferor of a dog shall fail 275
to comply with the requirements of division (A) of this section. 276
A violation of this division is a strict liability offense and 277
section 2901.20 of the Revised Code does not apply. 278

(2) No seller or other transferor of a dog shall fail to 279
comply with the requirements of division (B) or (C) of this 280
section. A violation of this division is a strict liability 281
offense and section 2901.20 of the Revised Code does not apply. 282

(E) (1) Whoever violates division (D) (1) of this section is 283
guilty of a minor misdemeanor. 284

(2) Whoever violates division (D) (2) of this section is 285
guilty of a minor misdemeanor on a first offense and of a 286
misdemeanor of the fourth degree on each subsequent offense. 287

(F) Division (C) of this section does not apply to an 288
animal shelter for dogs with respect to a dog concerning which 289
it transferred ownership or possession to another person if both 290
of the following apply: 291

(1) The animal shelter for dogs did not have knowledge and 292
could not have reasonably ascertained that the dog is a 293
dangerous or vicious dog. 294

(2) Before the transfer of the dog, the animal shelter for 295
dogs asked the following questions of the dog's previous owner, 296
keeper, or harbinger, if such person is known and if the dog was 297
not impounded under section 959.132 of the Revised Code: 298

(a) "Has the dog ever chased or attempted to attack or 299
bite a person? If yes, describe the incident(s) in which the 300
behavior occurred." 301

(b) "Has the dog ever bitten a person? If yes, describe 302
the incident(s) in which the behavior occurred." 303

(c) "Has the dog ever seriously injured or killed a 304
person? If yes, describe the incident(s) in which the behavior 305
occurred." 306

(d) "Has the dog previously been designated a nuisance,
dangerous, or vicious dog? If yes, indicate the designation that
was assigned, the date of designation, and in which county or
city the designation was made."

Sec. 955.111. (A) If a seller or other transferor of a dog
has knowledge that the dog is a wolfdog hybrid, within ten days
after the transfer of ownership or possession of the wolfdog
hybrid, the seller or other transferor shall give to the buyer
or other transferee, the board of health for the district in
which the buyer or other transferee resides, and the dog warden
of the county in which the buyer or other transferee resides, a
completed copy of a written form on which the seller shall
furnish the following information:

(1) The name and address of the buyer or other transferee
of the wolfdog hybrid;

(2) The age, sex, color, applicable DNA information, and
current registration number of the wolfdog hybrid.

In addition, the seller shall answer the following
questions, which shall be specifically stated on the form as
follows:

"Has the wolfdog hybrid ever chased or attempted to attack
or bite a person? If yes, describe the incident(s) in which the
behavior occurred."

"Has the wolfdog hybrid ever bitten a person? If yes,
describe the incident(s) in which the behavior occurred."

"Has the wolfdog hybrid ever seriously injured or killed a
person? If yes, describe the incident(s) in which the behavior
occurred."

The seller or other transferor shall obtain the signature 335
of the buyer or other transferee after a statement on the form 336
that the buyer or other transferee understands that such person 337
is acquiring a wolfdog hybrid. 338

The dog warden of the county in which the seller resides 339
shall furnish the form to the seller at no cost. 340

(B) No seller or other transferor of a wolfdog hybrid 341
shall fail to comply with the requirements of division (A) of 342
this section. A violation of this division is a strict liability 343
offense and section 2901.20 of the Revised Code does not apply. 344

(C) Whoever violates division (B) of this section is 345
guilty of a minor misdemeanor on a first offense and of a 346
misdemeanor of the fourth degree on each subsequent offense. 347

(D) Division (A) of this section does not apply to an 348
animal shelter for dogs with respect to a wolfdog hybrid 349
concerning which it transferred ownership or possession to 350
another person if both of the following apply: 351

(1) The animal shelter for dogs did not have knowledge and 352
could not have reasonably ascertained that the dog is a wolfdog 353
hybrid. 354

(2) Before the transfer of the wolfdog hybrid, the animal 355
shelter for dogs asked the following questions of the wolfdog 356
hybrid's previous owner, keeper, or harborer, if such person is 357
known and if the wolfdog hybrid was not impounded under section 358
959.132 of the Revised Code: 359

(a) "Has the dog ever chased or attempted to attack or 360
bite a person? If yes, describe the incident(s) in which the 361
behavior occurred." 362

(b) "Has the dog ever bitten a person? If yes, describe 363
the incident(s) in which the behavior occurred." 364

(c) "Has the dog ever seriously injured or killed a 365
person? If yes, describe the incident(s) in which the behavior 366
occurred." 367

Sec. 955.25. (A) No owner, keeper, or harborer of a 368
wolfdog hybrid shall fail to do any of the following: 369

(1) While that wolfdog hybrid is outdoors, but on the 370
premises of the owner, keeper, or harborer, securely confine the 371
wolfdog hybrid at all times in a locked pen that has a top, 372
locked fenced yard with fencing that is sufficiently constructed 373
to prevent escape, or other locked enclosure that has a top; 374

(2) While that wolfdog hybrid is inside a residential 375
dwelling or other building on the premises of the owner, keeper, 376
or harborer, and there is an invitee inside the dwelling or 377
building, securely confine the wolfdog hybrid at all times 378
inside the dwelling or building so that there is no reasonable 379
probability that the wolfdog hybrid comes into contact with the 380
invitee; 381

(3) While that wolfdog hybrid is off the premises of the 382
owner, keeper, or harborer, keep that wolfdog hybrid on a chain- 383
link leash or tether that is not more than six feet in length 384
and additionally do at least one of the following: 385

(a) Keep that wolfdog hybrid in a locked pen that has a 386
top, locked fenced yard with fencing that is sufficiently 387
constructed to prevent escape, or other locked enclosure that 388
has a top; 389

(b) Have the leash or tether controlled by a person who is 390
of suitable age and discretion or securely attach, tie, or affix 391

the leash or tether to the ground or a stationary object or 392
fixture so that the wolfdog hybrid is adequately restrained and 393
station such a person in close enough proximity to that wolfdog 394
hybrid so as to prevent it from causing injury to any person; 395

(c) Muzzle that wolfdog hybrid. 396

A violation of division (A) of this section is a strict 397
liability offense and section 2901.20 of the Revised Code does 398
not apply. 399

(B) No owner, keeper, or harbinger of a wolfdog hybrid 400
shall fail to do any of the following: 401

(1) Obtain liability insurance in an amount, exclusive of 402
interest and costs, that equals or exceeds one hundred thousand 403
dollars, with an insurer authorized to write liability insurance 404
in this state providing coverage in each occurrence because of 405
damage or bodily injury to or death of a person caused by the 406
wolfdog hybrid; 407

(2) Provide proof of that liability insurance upon request 408
to any law enforcement officer, county dog warden, or public 409
health official charged with enforcing this section; 410

(3) Notify the local dog warden immediately if any of the 411
following occurs: 412

(a) The wolfdog hybrid is loose or unconfined. 413

(b) The wolfdog hybrid bites a person, unless the dog is 414
on the property of the owner of the wolfdog hybrid, and the 415
person who is bitten is unlawfully trespassing or committing a 416
criminal act within the boundaries of that property. 417

(c) The wolfdog hybrid attacks another animal while the 418
wolfdog hybrid is off the property of the owner of the wolfdog 419

hybrid. 420

(4) If the wolfdog hybrid is sold, given to another 421
person, or dies, notify the county auditor and the dog warden 422
within ten days of the sale, transfer, or death. 423

(5) Prior to any training or veterinary care provided to 424
the wolfdog hybrid by a trainer or licensed veterinarian, 425
disclose to the trainer or licensed veterinarian, as applicable, 426
that the wolfdog hybrid is a wolfdog hybrid. 427

A violation of division (B) of this section is a strict 428
liability offense and section 2901.20 of the Revised Code does 429
not apply. 430

(C) No person shall recklessly do any of the following: 431

(1) Debark or surgically silence a dog that the person 432
knows or has reason to believe is a wolfdog hybrid; 433

(2) Possess a wolfdog hybrid if the person knows or has 434
reason to believe that the wolfdog hybrid has been debarked or 435
surgically silenced; 436

(3) Falsely attest on a waiver form provided by the 437
veterinarian that the person's dog is not a wolfdog hybrid or 438
otherwise provide false information on that written waiver form. 439

(D) Before a veterinarian debarks or surgically silences a 440
dog, the veterinarian may give the owner of the dog a written 441
waiver form that attests that the dog is not a wolfdog hybrid. 442
The written waiver form shall include all of the following: 443

(1) The veterinarian's license number and current business 444
address; 445

(2) The number of the license of the dog if the dog is 446

licensed; 447

(3) A reasonable description of the age, coloring, and 448
gender of the dog as well as any notable markings on the dog; 449

(4) The signature of the owner of the dog attesting that 450
the owner's dog is not a wolfdog hybrid; 451

(5) A statement that Ohio law prohibits any person from 452
doing any of the following: 453

(a) Debarking or surgically silencing a dog that the 454
person knows or has reason to believe is a wolfdog hybrid; 455

(b) Possessing a wolfdog hybrid if the person knows or has 456
reason to believe that the wolfdog hybrid has been debarked or 457
surgically silenced; 458

(c) Falsely attesting on a waiver form provided by the 459
veterinarian that the person's dog is not a wolfdog hybrid or 460
otherwise provide false information on that written waiver form. 461

(E) It is an affirmative defense to a charge of a 462
violation of division (C) of this section that the veterinarian 463
who is charged with the violation obtained, prior to debarking 464
or surgically silencing the dog, a written waiver form that 465
complies with this section and that attests that the dog is not 466
a wolfdog hybrid. 467

(F) (1) Whoever violates division (A) of this section is 468
guilty of a misdemeanor of the fourth degree on a first offense 469
and of a misdemeanor of the third degree on each subsequent 470
offense. Additionally, the court may order the offender to do 471
either or both of the following: 472

(a) Personally supervise the wolfdog hybrid that the 473
offender owns, keeps, or harbors; 474

(b) Cause the wolfdog hybrid to complete obedience 475
training. 476

(2) The court, in the alternative, may order the wolfdog 477
hybrid to be humanely destroyed by a licensed veterinarian or 478
the county dog warden at the owner's expense. 479

(G) (1) Whoever violates division (B) (1) of this section is 480
guilty of a minor misdemeanor on a first offense and a 481
misdemeanor of the fourth degree on each subsequent offense. 482

(2) Whoever violates division (B) (2), (3), (4), or (5) of 483
this section is guilty of a minor misdemeanor. 484

(H) Whoever violates division (C) (1), (2), or (3) of this 485
section is guilty of a felony of the fourth degree. 486
Additionally, the court shall order that the wolfdog hybrid 487
involved in the violation be humanely destroyed by a licensed 488
veterinarian or the county dog warden. Until the court makes a 489
final determination and during the pendency of any appeal of a 490
violation of division (C) (1), (2), or (3) of this section and at 491
the discretion of the dog warden, the wolfdog hybrid shall be 492
confined or restrained in accordance with the provisions of 493
division (A) of this section or at the county dog pound at the 494
owner's expense. 495

Section 2. That existing sections 955.01, 955.024, and 496
955.11 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed. 497