

- SUBJECT:** Developing information on inclusion of pets in protective orders
- COMMITTEE:** Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Leach, Davis, Julie Johnson, Krause, Middleton, Moody, Schofield, Smith
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Dutton
- WITNESSES:** For — Stacy Sutton Kerby, Texas Humane Legislation Network; (*Registered, but did not testify*: M. Paige Williams, for Dallas County Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot; Ken Shetter, One Safe Place; Kristen Lenau, Texas Association Against Sexual Assault)
- Against — None
- On — Amanda Oder, Texas Advocacy Project; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Thomas Parkinson)
- BACKGROUND:** Family Code ch. 81 requires that a court render a protective order as specified under statute if the court finds that family violence has occurred and is likely to occur in the future.
- Concerns have been raised that insufficient public information about the options available to a court when rendering a protective order, including the option to include provisions prohibiting a party from removing a pet or other animal, could be a factor in reports of some domestic violence victims refusing to leave an unsafe environment out of concern for a pet.
- DIGEST:** HB 674 would require the attorney general and the State Bar of Texas to jointly develop information to provide to the public about the provisions that could be included in a protective order in cases of family violence, including the ability of a court to render a protective order prohibiting a party from removing a pet, companion animal, or assistance animal from

the possession or care of a person named in the order.

The office of a prosecuting attorney would be required to make the developed information readily available at the attorney's office to people wishing to apply for protective orders.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021.