Parliamentary Bureau – Designation of a Bill at Stage 1

Dog Theft (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

1. The Dog Theft (Scotland) Bill was introduced in the Parliament on 17 February 2025 by the Member in Charge, Maurice Golden MSP.

Discussion

2. The Bill creates a statutory offence of dog theft, makes the theft of an assistance dog an aggravated offence, and allows victims of dog theft to provide a victim statement to the court. The Bill also provides for Scottish Ministers to collect data on dog theft, publish and lay before the Parliament annual reports on the operation of the Act, and review the operation of the Act after 5 years.

3. The Bill falls within the remit of the following committees—

   Rural Affairs and Islands Committee
   The remit of the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee includes matters relating to animal welfare falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands. The Bill creates a statutory offence of dog theft which takes account of the welfare of the dog, and accordingly the remit of this Committee is engaged.

   Criminal Justice Committee
   The remit of the Criminal Justice Committee includes matters relating to criminal justice falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs. The Bill creates a statutory offence, provides for an aggravation, and makes provision in relation to victim statements. Accordingly, the remit of this Committee is engaged.

4. It is understood that the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee is best placed to be designated as the lead committee in respect of this Bill.

5. We are not aware of any interest of the Criminal Justice Committee in being formally designated as a secondary committee. Lack of formal designation does not, of course, prevent the committee from considering the Bill if it subsequently decides to do so.

Recommendation

6. The Bureau is invited to consider recommending to the Parliament by motion that it agrees, under Rule 9.6.1, that the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee be designated as lead committee.

7. A draft motion can be found below.

PB/S6/25/031

Draft Parliamentary Bureau motion on the Dog Theft (Scotland) Bill:

Designation of Lead Committee – That the Parliament agrees that the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the Dog Theft (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1.

Parliamentary Business Team
February 2025