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Hancock's Fido-Friendly Outdoor Dining Act Passes Texas Senate

Bill lets restaurants permit dogs in outdoor dining areas, patios statewide

AUSTIN, TX - The Texas Senate yesterday passed SB 476 by Sen. Kelly Hancock (R-North Richland Hills), which allows restaurant patrons to be accompanied by a well-behaved and well-controlled dog in an outdoor dining area such as a patio or sidewalk café.

SB 476 would *not require* restaurants to permit dogs in outdoor dining areas, but provides that food service establishments statewide may do so if they choose.

"Since bringing this legislation forward, we've heard from dog lovers all across Texas who want to let their canine companions tag along more often," said Chairman Hancock. "I appreciate my colleagues' support on this legislation that's simply designed to get over-the-top government regulation out of the way of enjoying time with family or friends on a patio... *man's best friend included.*"

While some restaurants with outdoor dining options already allow patrons to bring along their furry friends, certain cities have enacted onerous restrictions on these establishments including dog variance applications, periodic fees, extra inspections, and burdensome rules and regulations.

SB 476 closely mirrors the relatively permissive municipal regulation on this issue in the City of Austin. It allows food service establishments to permit a customer to be accompanied by a dog in an outdoor dining area as long as: the establishment posts a sign stating that dogs are permitted, the dog doesn't go inside the restaurant, the customer keeps the dog on a leash and under control, the dog isn't allowed on top of chairs or tables, and no food preparation takes place in the outdoor area.

The bipartisan legislation now moves to the Texas House of Representatives for consideration. To read the full text of the bill and follow its progress, visit Texas Legislature Online at <https://capitol.texas.gov/>.

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Sen. Hancock represents [District 9](#), which includes portions of Dallas and Tarrant Counties. He currently serves as Chairman of the Texas Senate Committee on Business & Commerce and Vice Chair of the Texas Senate Committee on Transportation.