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This Article discusses the problem of veterinary lien laws that treat companion animals as inanimate objects, in a modern society that often views pets as members of the family. Historically, pets, like automobiles, were subject to possessory liens. If an automobile owner couldn’t pay the repair bill, the mechanic could keep possession of the car or sell the car to recoup costs. Veterinary lien laws treat companion animals in a similar fashion. If the owner cannot not pay the veterinary bill in full, the veterinarian is often permitted to keep possession of the companion animal until the bill is paid. Typically, after some designated time-limit expires, the companion animal is deemed abandoned and the veterinarian may sell or euthanize the animal. This Article highlights the hypocrisy of the veterinary industry that benefits from owners treating pets like family while simultaneously treating pets as mere property by using veterinary lien laws to assert liens against these owners.
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