



THE CAT FANCIERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

1805 Atlantic Avenue, P.O. Box 1005, Manasquan, NJ 08736-0805

<http://www.CFA.org>

Phone – 732.528.9797

Fax – 732-528.7391

Email -- CFA@CFA.org

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contact: Joan Miller (619) 269-0107

E-mail: JMillerArt@aol.com

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Forced Sterilization Bill Stumbles in Committee

Unfunded Mandate Faces Opposition from Pet Lovers

AB 1634, the "California Healthy Pets Act" suffered its first setback Tuesday when it failed to advance out of the Assembly Committee on Business and Professions. Thousands of cat fanciers, dog fanciers, pet owners, rescuers and animal welfare organizations have expressed opposition to the proposal to mandate removal of the reproductive organs of all cats and dogs in California. The author of the bill, Lloyd Levine, requested and was granted a two week continuance.

Critics expressed concerns that AB 1634 would require creation of a new bureaucracy to enforce the law, an unfunded mandate on animal control authorities. Every local jurisdiction in California would have to determine how to change ordinances and how to comply with these new requirements. This comes at a time when many local governments are repealing or reducing pet licensing programs as not cost effective. Many argue that other programs are already working, and that Levine's bill does not truly address the spay/neuter problem.

Most owned cats are already spayed or neutered. Stray and free-roaming cats, the real source of the numbers at animal shelters, are not addressed by the bill. *"The public has responded to education and today over 90% of OWNED cats are already sterilized"* noted Jean

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Grimm, an allbreed judge with the Cat Fanciers' Association. She continued: *"Cats in shelters are primarily UNOWNED. Those euthanized are too unsocial for adoption or kittens too young to survive."*

Many animal lovers believe AB 1634 would have negative consequences for pet owners, breeders and local jurisdictions in the State, and will result in more euthanasia. Fines for possessing an intact animal could lead to increased abandonment. *"We believe that AB 1634 will actually increase specifically the current 'un-owned cat problem that most of our shelters suffer from'"* writes Regina Shaffer of Las Flores Cat Club. Ms. Shaffer predicted: *"... more animals will be turned into shelters or left abandoned. Who will take in a pregnant stray cat if there is a \$500 fine for not possessing an 'intact permit'?"* Humane and rescue groups have echoed this concern. Alley Cat Allies notes that if AB 1634 passes: *"The fear of punishment may lead many to abandon animals in streets and parks adding to undesired reproduction and the nuisance/safety hazards of strays."*

Veterinarians observe that many valid reasons to delay neutering and spaying exist. The timing of any surgery should only be based on the needs of the individual animal, not subject to some broad mandate in law. As with medical decisions generally, whether and when to conduct surgery of this nature should be determined by an informed owner, with the guidance of a licensed veterinarian, based on prevailing needs and conditions.

The author claims the bill allows exceptions to sterilization for show cats and dogs. However, cats and dogs must have been shown in competition to qualify for an intact permit. Independent analysis by the Assembly Committee on Business and Professions notes: *"This bill stipulates that an animal must be spayed or neutered at four months of age or possess an intact permit; however, at four months of age it would be impossible for an animal to meet this requirement in order to obtain an intact permit."*

National and statewide trends over the past decade show huge drops in the number of healthy adoptable pets euthanized without forced sterilization. Ironically, this hearing came one day after Los Angeles issued a press release stating that **NO** adoptable cats or dogs were

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euthanized in Los Angeles City shelters in March. *"Not only were no healthy dogs or cats killed in the month of March, but also only nine treatable animals were euthanized and only after three regimens of treatment failed to produce any improvement in the health of these animals."* The animals now euthanized in shelters are often unadoptable because they are too old, too young, too sick, or too anti-social.

As a result, many shelters statewide are now importing adoption animals from other states, or even other countries such as China, Aruba, Yugoslavia, Mexico and Puerto Rico. The U.S. Government also estimates that over 10,000 puppies a year are smuggled into California from Mexico to meet demand. An unintended consequence of AB 1634 may be to force pet buyers to obtain their pets from out of state sources, with little or no control over the health of the pets or conditions of the facility. The "Healthy Pets Act" could lead to more under-age and sick pets being sold in California.

About The Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc.

Founded in 1906 as a non-profit association of member clubs, The Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc. (CFA) is the world's largest registry of pedigreed cats. CFA's mission is to preserve and promote the pedigreed breeds of cats and to enhance the well-being of ALL cats. Our member clubs are a positive force in California. Cat fanciers raise fine examples of their chosen breed; help to educate the public about proper cat care, spay/neuter and responsible pet ownership. Many fanciers are involved with cat show production, cat breed rescue and trap/neuter/return programs for feral cats. CFA's Winn Feline Foundation is a major source of funding for cat health studies.

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