

Jana J. Wright

Subject: RE: mandatory s/n recommending committee 11/03

From: Jana J. Wright
Sent: Monday, October 26, 2009 4:10 PM
To: 'Tuesday James'
Cc: Chris Giunchigliani
Subject: mandatory s/n recommending committee 11/03

hi tuesday welcome back from vacation. a few comments on bill# 2009-44 mandatory s/n.

page 1 line 17 add **provided that term shall not include providing of nourishment to a stray or feral cat or dog.**

page 1 line 23 (C) That has received appropriate training, **certification** and is being used:
i have heard people claim their animal is a therapy dog and there is no way the animal would be considered a therapy dog.

page 2 lines 15-16 AC will confiscate animals not in compliance with this ordinance?

page 2 line 18 i suggest **monthly** instead of quarterly for pet shops to report.

page 4 lines 7-9 waiving of fees if owner qualifies "pursuant to regulations adopted by the animal regulation officer, for such waivers". **have these regulations been drawn up? if yes what are the criteria?**

page 4 (E) line 14 delivery of a certificate of vaccination **and proof of spay if applicable to the.....(people need to show proof their female animals have been spayed before release)**

page 4 (G) lines 20-22 if owner claims they are going to get a fancier's permit is the animal released and an appointment made with AC for an onsite visit or does the animal have to be s/n before release?

page 6 (E) lines 13- 14 feral cat impounded...may be euthanized after forty-eight hours **should be changed to 72 hours for consistency in Lied procedures. plus it is a JDLR. (just doesn't look right)**

who is on the recommending committee? is this where the public is allowed to give their opinions or will there be a public hearing in front of the city council? if you could explain the process i would appreciate it. jana

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11/2/2009

Exploring the Surplus Cat and Dog Problem

Highlights of Five Research Publications Regarding Relinquishment of Pets

When the National Council on Pet Population Study & Policy first formed to research pet population dynamics it determined that nearly a third of the dogs and cats entering shelters were animals that did have homes but whose owners had relinquished them to an animal shelter. Anecdotal evidence was that most of these animals were not kittens and puppies, but adult animals whose chances of adoption from the shelter were not great. It was clear that if these animals could be kept in the home, and the human/animal bond strengthened, then the euthanasia rate could be reduced significantly.

Part of the Council's mission is to identify the numbers of animals entering shelters, the reasons why they ended up there and how that population compares to the animal population that remain in homes.

Giving up on our best friends

The evidence is clear. People are not in the know. When it comes to problem solving, some pet owners do not have adequate knowledge to determine solutions. They are unaware what may be contributing to the problems they face. Many are experiencing the results of unrealistic expectations. The bottom line? Animals, who otherwise might remain happily in their home are relinquished to shelters across the country.

REGIONAL SHELTER RELINQUISHMENT SURVEY

To address these issues the NCPPSP performed the first multi centered study of the characteristics of people relinquishing animals to shelters and



THE TOP TEN REASONS WE GIVE UP OUR PETS

DOGS

1. Moving
2. Landlord issues
3. Cost of pet maintenance
4. No time for pet
5. Inadequate facilities
6. Too many pets in home
7. Pet illness(es)
8. Personal problems
9. Biting
10. No homes for littermates

CATS

1. Too many in house
2. Allergies
3. Moving
4. Cost of pet maintenance
5. Landlord issues
6. No homes for littermates
7. House soiling
8. Personal problems
9. Pet illness(es)
10. Inadequate facilities

NOTE: The listings here represent responses given as reasons for relinquishment. Up to five reasons could be given for each animal as owners often cite multiple issues.

Animals relinquished for euthanasia due to illness or age, and animals turned in as strays were excluded from this list as these reasons do not necessarily represent breaking of the human-animal bond. Eight of the top ten reasons for both species are shared.

of the animals being relinquished. The protocol for the Regional Shelter Relinquishment Survey (Shelter Survey) was designed by a group of veterinary epidemiologists associated with major universities, and was carried out under their supervision. A great deal of data were collected analyzed and published as scientific papers in a peer-reviewed journal.

Trained teams of interviewers visited twelve shelters from four regions of the country to conduct interviews with people as they relinquished dogs and cats.

Those who participated in the Shelter Relinquishment Survey were asked a series of questions to provide insight about the pet, the owner, and the household in which they both lived. The questions addressed:

- the animal's health status
- the reasons for surrender
- the animal's species, breed or breed-type, age, gender and neuter status
- where the animal was acquired
- how long the person had the animal
- the price paid for the animal
- the animal's care
- veterinarian appointments
- the approximate time the animal spent outside
- how much training the animal had received (dog)
- behavioral issues
- the number of dogs and cats in the home
- the number & source of animals added to the household in the previous year
- how any other animals had recently exited the household
- characteristics of the owner - age, gender, ethnicity/race, income range, state of residence, and education level

Location & Number of Participating Shelters:

- Bergen County, NJ (1)
- New York City, NY (1)
- Knox and Anderson Counties, TN (2)
- Jefferson County, KY (2)
- Denver, Larimer, and Weld Counties, CO (3)
- Sacramento County, CA (3)

Participants were asked to answer a series of twelve questions intended to reveal their general level of knowledge regarding cats and dogs and their attitudes toward animals.

NATIONAL PET-OWNING HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

In order to have a standard of comparison from the general population, households in the United States that owned at least one dog or cat were surveyed to collect the same information. This survey, known as the National Pet-owning Household Survey (Household Survey), was conducted in conjunction with the American Veterinary Medical Association and had two phases. In the first phase, a list of 80,000 pet owning and non-pet owning households with diverse characteristics were contacted by mail. These households were selected as being representative of all U.S. households. From the responses to the first mailing, 7,399 households were selected to be a part of the second phase. Second-phase households included at least one dog or cat. About half had either a dog or a cat, and a small number had both species. Half of the households were selected based on the fact that a dog or cat had left the household during the previous year.

HIGHLIGHTS OF RESEARCH

Highlights of five scientific papers based on the findings of the Shelter Relinquishment Survey and the Household Survey are presented here.

Human and Animal Factors Related to Relinquishment¹

This paper presented and evaluated the results of the Shelter Survey, in which interviews were conducted with 3,772 owners who relinquished a total of 3,676 dogs and litters of puppies, and 1,409 cats and litters of kittens. Stray or un-owned animals and animals for whom euthanasia was requested due to illness or old age were excluded from these data.

Reasons for relinquishment common to both dogs and cats included moving, landlord not allowing pets, too many animals in household, cost of pet maintenance, owner having personal problems, inadequate facilities for a pet, and no

homes available for littermates. Other reasons for cats were allergies in the family, house soiling, and incompatibility with other pets while other reasons for dogs were lack of time for them, illness of the dog, and biting.

Findings included that 30% of dogs and 6% of relinquished cats were purebred. Most animals were between 5 months and 3 years of age. Twenty-seven percent of dogs and 36.5% of cats were reported to live outdoors always or almost always.

The findings reported in this paper were consistent with studies performed by other researchers in other shelter settings.

Relinquishment Due to Health and Personal Issues²

Because most of the people surrendering animals reported personal issues as one of the causes, this second paper examined the Shelter Survey results to learn more specifically what those personal issues are and how they might be addressed so that owners could keep their pets. When all the various reasons for relinquishment that dealt with health or personal issues are grouped together they become the most prevalent cause of relinquishment for cats and the third most common for dogs. These issues were surpassed by behavior and housing concerns for relinquishment of dogs. Examples of the type of health and personal issues cited by those relinquishing pets included a birth or death in the family or a new job or other change that would require the owner to be away from home more. Allergies to the pet, primarily to cats, were also cited.

The characteristics of the people who relinquished pets due to health and personal issues were similar to those of people who relinquished for all other reasons. Seventeen percent of the people who were relinquishing their pet due to health and personal issues still had one or more other dogs or cats remaining in their home. More than one-third of people relinquishing a pet due to health and personal issues also reported another problem: for dogs, a behavior problem and for cats, too many animals in the home were most frequently reported.

All Kinds of Reasons

When asked why they were giving up their pet(s), survey participants were allowed to give up to five reasons. The reasons for surrender which survey participants gave included:

1. **Behavior Problems - aggression to humans**
bites, aggressive to people
2. **Animal Behavior Problems - animal-to-animal**
incompatible with other pets, aggressive to animals, killed another animal
3. **Animal Behavior Problems (other)**
house soiling, inside destruction, escapes, outside destruction, too active, too vocal, attention, euthanasia requested due to behavior, not friendly, afraid, jumps on people, animal jealousy, pesters to be outside, chases people, chases cars, coprophagy, pica
4. **Requests for Euthanasia**
due to illness, old age, young age, or other reasons
5. **Animal medical - health**
ill, injured, surgery complications
6. **Animal Characteristics**
wrong species, sheds, too old, too young, too mellow, wrong sex, not protective, too small
7. **Human Housing Issues**
moving, inadequate facilities, landlord, not allowed by parents, inadequate fencing, zoning problems with the number or type of pet
8. **Household Animal Overpopulation**
can't find homes for litter, too many animals in household, animal is pregnant
9. **Owner Lifestyle**
allergies in family, children and pet not compatible, divorce, gift, new baby, owner personal problems, owner traveling, owner pregnancy, no time for pet, owner died
10. **Owner Unprepared/Inappropriate Expectations**
cost, too much responsibility, owner fears disease transmission or damage, litterbox odor
11. **Other**
No apparent owner, legal cases, body disposal, dead on admission, no reason given

Based on evaluation of the health and personal issues reported, the authors of this paper suggested ways to address this type of relinquishment. Their results suggested that education and counseling of pet owners before and after they acquire a pet, and providing temporary housing for pets when owners are experiencing a personal crisis may reduce relinquishment of pets.

Moving and Relinquishment³

This third publication shed light on that common catch-all reason for relinquishment: "moving". Moving was the most common reason given for relinquishment of dogs in the study, and the third most common for cats. Because relinquishers could give up to five possible reasons for giving up pets, the term "moving" was further defined. Those people who gave up pets because they were moving also said that their landlord would not allow pets, that parents or other people living in their household would not allow pets, or that their home had housing rules or restrictions. Others reported that their home was too small, had no yard, or had "no place to keep the animal". More than half of these relinquishers also reported behavior problems in their pets, strongly suggesting that housing restrictions are not the only consideration when moving is given as the reason for relinquishment.

Statistics show that young people are more likely to move. This survey found that a large number of those relinquishing pets due to moving were also young pet owners, significantly more so than would have been expected if all age groups were of equal risk of relinquishing pets. The authors concluded that moving is an important life event that often results in the relinquishment of a pet to an animal shelter, and suggested that educational efforts stressing both companion animal selection and the process and difficulties of moving with dogs and cats might be best aimed at the young-adult members of the U.S. population. However, age alone should not be a reason to deny pet ownership.

Behavior Reasons for Relinquishment⁴

This fourth paper closely examined the behavioral reasons for which pet owners relinquish their pets to animal shelters. When all reasons for relinquishment that dealt with any type of behavioral problem are grouped together, then behavioral problems were the most common reasons dogs were given up and the second most common for cats. The authors found that households that had only a single animal were less likely to give them up for behavior problems, and that owners who added a second pet might encounter problems leading to relinquishment of one or both pets. The authors

suggested that careful counseling before acquisition of a second pet about how pets interact with each other might be preventative. Owners who relinquished dogs for behavior problems were likely to have owned them for less than three months, whereas cats were owned for 1 to 2 years before being given up, suggesting that intervention for dog behavior problems would need to be available as soon as the dog entered a household, and soon thereafter for cats.

Failed Versus Successful Relationships⁵

Are the people who take their animals to shelters for relinquishment significantly different than those who retain their pets or dispose of them by other means, or are the animals themselves quite different? This article is the first to compare the information from the Shelter Survey to that of the Household Survey. The authors found that relinquished pets were more likely to be young, intact (not neutered), and of mixed breed. Animals owned for a short period of time were more likely to be relinquished; the longer the length of ownership, the less chance they would be given up. Contrary to what many shelter workers would expect, these data showed that dogs received as gifts were much less likely to be relinquished to an animal shelter than those who were acquired directly from an animal shelter, a friend, a pet shop, or as a stray. Dogs whose owners paid \$100 or more for them were less likely to be relinquished. Cats were rarely purchased, and the amount paid for a cat is not associated with the risk of relinquishment.

In general, dogs who soiled in the house, damaged things, were overly active, or were reported to be fearful were more likely to be relinquished. However, behavioral issues were not unique to the dogs relinquished at shelters. Veterinarians and other animal professionals should be concerned that behavioral problems are exhibited to varying degrees by the dogs who remained in homes.

Undesirable behavior played a lesser part in the relinquishment of cats than dogs. Cats who soiled in the house, damaged things, or were overly active were at greater risk.

It is disturbing to find that people had poor general knowledge about the animals they own. Significantly more of those relinquishing dogs and cats

felt that the animal would be better off having a litter prior to being spayed. And approximately half of the owners in the Household Survey comparison group also wrongly thought this was true or did not know the answer. Those relinquishing dogs were less likely to know how often females could come into heat (estrus).

It is this lack of knowledge that might contribute to unrealistic expectations or inappropriate actions on the part of the owner. People need to know more about why animals behave the way they do, and more general knowledge about the animals they take into their homes to make for successful relationships. The authors suggested that education of pet owners about the general biology and behavior of dogs and cats might lessen the possibility of relinquishment of their pets. Veterinary clinics, animal shelters, pet stores, trainers and breeders could all be involved in proactive educational efforts to prevent the development of problems or to deal with existing ones. Data from these surveys suggest that the window of opportunity for intervention and education is a narrow one based on the length of ownership prior to relinquishment.

REFERENCES

¹ *Human and Animal Factors Related to the Relinquishment of Dogs and Cats in 12 Selected Animal Shelters in the U.S.A.*, published in the *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, volume 1, number 3, pages 207-226, 1998. Request reprints from M.D. Salman, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO 80523

² *Reasons for Relinquishment of Companion Animals in U.S. Animal Shelters: Selected Health and Personal Issues*, published in the *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, volume 2, number 1, pages 41-57, 1999. Request reprints from Janet M. Scarlett, Department of Clinical Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853

³ *Moving: Characteristics of Dogs and Cats and Those Relinquishing Them to 12 U.S. Animal Shelters*, published in the *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, volume 2, number 2, pages 83-96, 1999. Request reprints from John C. New, Jr., Department of Comparative Medicine, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Tennessee, Box 1071, Knoxville, TN 37901-1071

⁴ *Behavioral Reasons for Relinquishment of Dogs and Cats to 12 Shelters*, published in the *Journal*

VETERINARIANS AND OTHER ANIMAL PROFESSIONALS COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

It isn't just puppies and kittens anymore. There are other issues causing people to give up their animals, some issues that could be addressed in ways that would allow the animal to remain a part of the family.

People have unrealistic expectations. When those aren't met, they give up. Knowing why some human-animal relationships are unsuccessful is the first step toward prevention. From a mountain of data, some patterns and possible solutions are emerging.

The majority of dogs and cats relinquished had been in the home for less than a year. This leaves a narrow window of opportunity for salvaging the relationship. Education must be implemented during the initial health examination at a veterinary clinic or source of acquisition. Here misconceptions can be clarified, obedience training can be recommended and potential behavior problems could be identified and/or discussed.

A few minutes of time in the clinic could result in years of trust, respect and loyalty from a client experiencing a lasting, successful relationship with a companion animal. Animal professionals are encouraged to utilize the information from this research to begin their own program of building successful human-animal relationships.

National Council

ON PET POPULATION STUDY & POLICY

of *Applied Animal Welfare Science*, volume 3, number 2, pages 93-106, 2000. Request reprints from M.D. Salman, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO 80523

P.O. Box 341
New London, MN 56273
www.petpopulation.org

⁵ *Characteristics of Shelter-relinquished Animals and Their Owners Compared with Animals and Their Owners in U.S. Pet-owning Households*, published in the *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, volume 3, number 3, pages 179-201, 2000. Request reprints from John C. New, Jr., Department of Comapartive Medicine, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Tennessee, Box 1071, Knoxville, TN 37901-1071

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

American Animal Hospital Association
American Humane Association
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
American Veterinary Medical Association
Association for Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine
Cat Fanciers Association, Inc.
The Humane Society of the United States
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
National Animal Control Association
Society of Animal Welfare Administrators

Those more likely to be relinquished

DOGS

- sexually intact
- obtained at little or no cost
- over 6 mo. when obtained
- were more work than expected



Animals were less likely to be relinquished if...

- S/he had regular veterinary care
- S/he participated in obedience training

CATS

- sexually intact
- without veterinary care
- frequent house soilers
- being more work than expected
- not fitting the expectations of a cat's role in the family



- The owner had read a book or other educational material about cat behavior
- S/he had veterinary care

PetPac

AVMA, ASPCA Join PetPAC Opposing MSN

May 21, 2009

The American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals have both come out opposing mandatory spay and neuter.

Both organizations cite similar reasons to why PetPAC has opposed mandatory spay/neuter MSN for over two years. In a javma News article for May 15th, the AVMA states: "Mandatory spay/neuter a bad idea"

"The AVMA does not support regulations or legislation mandating spay/neuter of privately owned, non-shelter dogs and cats. Although spaying and neutering helps control dog and cat populations, mandatory approaches may contribute to pet owners avoiding licensing, rabies vaccination and veterinary care for their pets, and may have other unintended "

After review and discussion, committee members agreed that the AVMA should not support regulations or legislation mandating spay/neuter of privately owned, non-shelter dogs and cats for a number of reasons, which were provided in the background of the recommended policy changes.

Although spay/neuter is an important part of effective population control programs, and may benefit individual dogs and cats if performed at the appropriate time, whether and when to spay/neuter specific animals requires the application of science and professional judgment to ensure the best outcome for veterinary patients and their owners.

Prevention of unexpected litters; reduced incidences of some cancers and reproductive diseases; and prevention and amelioration of certain undesirable behaviors have been documented as benefits to spaying/neutering dogs and cats. However, potential health problems associated with spaying and neutering have also been identified, including an increased risk of prostatic cancer in males; increased risks of bone cancer and hip dysplasia in large-breed dogs associated with sterilization before maturity; and increased incidences of obesity, diabetes, urinary tract infections, urinary incontinence, and hypothyroidism.

There are conflicting reports regarding euthanasia rates and animal control costs achieved in communities that have enacted mandatory spay/neuter.

Mandating spay/neuter can increase canine, feline, and zoonotic disease risks because some people will attempt to avoid detection of their unaltered pets by failing to seek veterinary care."

The ASPCA joins in opposing MSN.

In its Position Statement on Mandatory Spay/Neuter Laws, the society writes;

"To the knowledge of the ASPCA, the only method of population control that has demonstrated long-term efficacy in significantly reducing the number of animals entering animal shelters is the voluntary sterilization of owned pets. There is also evidence that sterilizing very specific, at-

risk sub-populations of companion animals such as feral cats and animals in shelters can also contribute to reductions in overpopulation. In contrast, the ASPCA is not aware of any credible evidence demonstrating a statistically significant enhancement in the reduction of shelter intake or euthanasia as a result of the implementation of a mandatory spay/neuter law.

.....Caution must therefore be applied when interpreting existing claims regarding the effects of local mandatory spay/neuter (MSN) laws. First, because nationwide per capita shelter intake and euthanasia generally are in decline due to voluntary spaying and neutering,

....Another complication is that it can be extremely difficult for even a veterinary professional to visually determine if an animal, particularly a female, has been sterilized; it would be virtually impossible for an animal control officer to make those determinations in the field.

.....in at least one community that enacted an MSN law, fewer pets were subsequently licensed, likely due to owners' reluctance to pay either the high fee for keeping an unaltered animal or the fee to have the pet altered....

....As a result, the proportion of pets from poor communities who are being euthanized in shelters remains high; shelter euthanasia rates in the poorest counties in states including California and New Jersey are several times higher than those in the most affluent counties....

Each community is unique, however, in terms of the particular sources and causes of companion animal overpopulation and the primary barriers that exist to having pets altered. No one-size-fits-all solution is therefore possible.

...the most important step a humane community can take to decrease companion animal overpopulation is to make a safe, effective, voluntary spay/neuter program available and readily accessible to the community, with programs and incentives targeted to the populations known to be contributing disproportionately to shelter intake and euthanasia.

Both of these organizations echo arguments to MSN that PetPAC has been fight for. These organizations join with the California Veterinary Medical Association, the Illinois Veterinary Medical Association and hundreds of other dog and cat organizations, including law enforcement, hunting, service, guide dogs, hearing, herding, farming, cattle, sport and working dog groups opposed to MSN.

It is PetPAC hope our lawmakers will finally realize what animal experts already know. MSN does not work, cannot be enforced and will cost millions to state and local governments.



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NAIA POLICY STATEMENT: MANDATORY SPAY/NEUTER LEGISLATION

NAIA opposes mandatory spay/neuter legislation because 1) there is no evidence to suggest that it is effective in achieving its stated goal; 2) causes well-documented health and developmental problems in some pets, especially when performed before sexual maturity; 3) pushes responsible breeders out of the licensing system; 4) reduces the availability of well-bred healthy, home bred and raised puppies and kittens; 5) encourages the importation of puppies and dogs from less acceptable sources, including foreign countries; 6) laws that force owners to perform surgery on their pets without a rational basis for doing so may be unconstitutional.

[Click here to read NAIA's full position statement on this issue.](#)

In view of continuing campaigns that tout the benefits of mandatory spay/neuter legislation which have never been substantiated, the NAIA believes that it is time for a new and clear resolution to guide governmental efforts in solving pet-related problems. Therefore, we respectfully submit:

The Responsible Pet Owner's Approach to Animal Regulation

WHEREAS, even the most sincere lawmakers can get swept along momentarily by well marketed but flawed ideas; and

WHEREAS, mandatory spay/neuter legislation has never succeeded anywhere in the US; and

WHEREAS, mandatory spay/neuter laws have generally led to increased costs for animal control agencies, as [Santa Cruz, California encountered](#); and

WHEREAS, mandatory spay/neuter laws like the one proposed in Chicago penalize only the law abiding minority who actually license their pets; and

WHEREAS, similar legislation elsewhere has pushed good people out of the licensing system and reduced certainty regarding rabies vaccination rates; and

WHEREAS, top medical professionals and animal experts, such as the Illinois (www.isvma.org) and Chicago (www.chicagovma.org) veterinary associations, the American Kennel Club (www.akc.org) and Cat Fanciers Associations (www.cfainc.org), and moderate, fact-based animal welfare organizations such as the National Animal Interest Alliance (www.naiaonline.org) all oppose mandatory spay/neuter; and

WHEREAS, the veterinary scientific literature disputes claims that neutering dogs will diminish

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dog bites; and

WHEREAS, mandatory spay/neuter laws have proven unenforceable and generated constitutional challenges that are currently in the courts; and

WHEREAS, virtually everyone but outright criminals wants to eliminate dog fighting; and

WHEREAS, any system that makes the law abiding, responsible pet owners who license their pets accountable for the ones who don't is inherently unfair and destined to fail; and

WHEREAS, modern learning theory and dog trainers teach that success only comes from 1) rewarding good behavior; 2) correcting bad behavior; and 3) never giving a command that cannot be enforced;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the city of [] vote NO on this new spay/neuter proposal and instead work with the law abiding pet experts in veterinary associations, kennel and cat clubs and national animal welfare groups to write effective, enforceable laws that will build rather than destroy community support for Animal Care and Control and respect for pet laws.

Further, NAIA recommends a serious look at NAIA's Guide to Pet Friendly Ordinances and Model Ordinance:

[Pet Friendly Guide](#)

[Model Ordinance](#)

Together they offer methods for writing enforceable laws that build support for community animal control by rewarding responsible pet owners and applying meaningful penalties to problem owners.

For more information, please call on the National Animal Interest Alliance at www.naiaonline.org or at 503-761-8962

Be sure to see these additional NAIA policy statements

[Introduction](#) / [Pet Ownership](#) / [Dogs](#) / [Pets and the Community](#) / [Guardianship](#)
[Animals in Entertainment](#) / [Animal husbandry](#) / [Agriculture](#) / [Research](#) / [Wildlife](#)

THE DARK SIDE OF MANDATES

Why Punitive Legislation Fails

Legislation is often thought of as a quick solution to high rates of shelter killing. "If only we had a law," the argument goes, "all the bad, irresponsible people would have to take care of their pets properly, and shelters wouldn't have to kill so many animals." If this were true, given the proliferation of punitive mandates nationwide, there should be many No Kill communities. That there are not, is because experience has proven that legislation is far from a cure-all. In fact, it often has the opposite effect. Communities that have passed such laws are not only far from No Kill, many are moving in the opposite direction.

Studies show the primary reasons people do not sterilize their pets are cost and lack of access to spay/neuter services. The same is true for licensing. The higher the cost, the lower the rate of compliance. As a result, lower-income households with animals, those who are unaware of these laws, and truly irresponsible people will not comply in significant numbers. Punitive legislation will only discourage people from caring for homeless pets or drive disadvantaged people "underground," making them even harder to reach and help. If a person is feeding homeless cats, they will be loathe to turn to the shelter for low-cost spay/neuter help or other support because doing so risks putting the cats in jeopardy for some technical violation of a community's pet limit, licensing, or leash law. Compounding the problem is the fact that enforcement of ordinances, such as mandatory spay/neuter is often selective and complaint-based, leaving people who care for animals vulnerable to retaliation from neighbors and others, even when the animals are healthy and well cared for.

Furthermore, legislation may be worded so that the result of non-compliance is the impoundment and death of the animal. Alternatively, the laws contain significant fines which are likely to lead to abandonment, relinquishment to shelters, or people refusing to

offer care to homeless strays. That is why many jurisdictions have seen their impound and death rates increase following passage of laws which give agencies carte blanche to round up and kill outdoor animals. If a shelter has high rates of shelter killing, it makes no sense to support the passing of laws that give them greater power and more reasons to impound—and subsequently kill—even more animals.

Finally, in most jurisdictions, licensing revenues go into a city or county's general fund, not directly back to the animal control agency. As a result, even where licensing rates increase, it has no direct impact on shelter finances. In the end, the shelter is diverting money from needed programs to hire more officers to write more citations, only to raise money for the city or county, at the expense of its own needs.

When Fort Wayne, Indiana, San Mateo, California, and King County, Washington, passed their animal control legislation, for example, these laws were hailed as "national models." To this day, animal activists use these as examples of "success" in order to convince their own communities to adopt similar approaches. A hard look, however, reveals they are a dismal failure. Fort Wayne is still killing three out of every four domestic animals, San Mateo killed more animals in the

TORY LICENSING AND NEUTER LAWS

unincorporated areas of the county which passed their law (resulting in the first ever increase in cats being killed) as compared to cities where the law was not passed, and King County's law reduced the number of animals being saved. (See "There Ought Not to be a Law," No Kill Sheltering, Volume I, Issue I, 2007).

Indeed, no better proof exists for this proposition than Long Beach, California, which has had a breeding ban for over thirty years. If legislation is the answer, Long Beach should be a No Kill community by now. But it is far from it, as many homeless animals have discovered who have had the misfortune to enter that animal control shelter system. By contrast, the two most successful communities in the nation with the highest percentage of animals going home alive—Tompkins County, NY (91% save rate) and Charlottesville, Virginia (92% save rate)—have no mandatory cat licensing or spay/neuter laws.

Nonetheless, local activists and national groups—even those who embrace No Kill and are sincere in their desire to end killing—continue to champion the legislative approach. While activists across the country have been emboldened by the No Kill movement, they have almost uniformly failed to heed the central lesson: never mind the laws, reform the shelter. While they are demanding success in their own communities, they fail to demand that local shelters either replicate the programs that eliminated the deaths in other communities for all but irremediably suffering and non-rehabilitatable animals, or to insist upon the removal of directors who refuse to implement them. Instead, many seek No Kill through traditional legislative models. The end result is not hard to predict.

Unfortunately, the viewpoint that the public, rather than the shelter, is to blame for the volume of killing has been internalized by animal activists all over the country. And the tool they use to make the public responsible is a resurrection of the failed legislation model. Since the very "solution" they propose makes the goal impossible, however, they are forced to seek more citations, greater penalties, more animals subject to impounding, and more draconian laws, increasing the divide between the shelter and the public, and taking themselves further and further away from the goal of true lifesaving with each piece of punitive legislation.



Sadly, it is a pattern played out by animal activists throughout the country, over and over again. Despite animal control's dysfunction and overkill, animal activists continue to ignore and apologize for the shelter's failures by blaming the public, rather than those who are directly responsible: the very staff and administrators who fail every time they inject an animal with an

overdose of barbiturates in the face of alternatives like foster care, offsite adoptions, and working with rescue groups. These activists fail to see the real causes and solutions to shelter killing because the bar or "industry standard" has been set so low, and because the national agencies to which they look for guidance reaffirm this point of view again and again.

In a democracy, animal lovers are free to believe whatever they want. But believing something doesn't make it so, and never will.

EMPOWERED TO KILL

At a time when shelters are killing the majority of animals they are taking in, they are successfully seeking legislation which gives them authority to impound even more animals. Since they claim they have little choice but to kill most animals, the animals now in violation of a new law or ordinance have little hope of getting out alive. It is hardly surprising that many jurisdictions actually see impound and kill rates increase after passage of these laws.

Meanwhile, animals continue to be killed in appalling numbers and reform efforts are squandered on an agenda that has no hope of achieving success. Moreover, the animals are paying the ultimate price for the false beliefs of animal activists. They are the ones being slaughtered en masse because of it.

With animals being killed every day in shelters because shelter leadership has not embraced the programs and services of the No Kill Equation (See No Kill Sheltering, Volume III, Issue 1, 2007), activists must move beyond the empty hope that punitive legislation will ever be anything but a failure. Animal activists are still championing a nineteenth century model of sheltering rooted in defeatism and failing to demand the real changes necessary for No Kill to succeed, while ignoring over a decade of No Kill success in other communities.

And as soon as activists realize this, they can begin the only proven process of saving lives: comprehensive implementation of programs like foster care, working with rescue groups and volunteers, TNR for feral cats, and offsite adoptions; or, regime change for shelter directors who refuse to do so. Unfortunately rather than champion the No Kill Equation, the only course of action that has created a No Kill community, they are chasing shadows. In turn, activists have developed a culture of defeatism, a sense of helplessness that No Kill cannot be achieved. They become apologists for the status quo, championing mediocrity and failure, when they should be demanding the resignation of shelter leadership.

HSUS: A FELINE'S FRIEND OR FOE?

In order to encourage passing of cat laws, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) asks activists and shelters to "document public health problems that relate to cats. Include diseases that are spread from cat to cat as well as those spread between cats and other animals." They claim that cats:

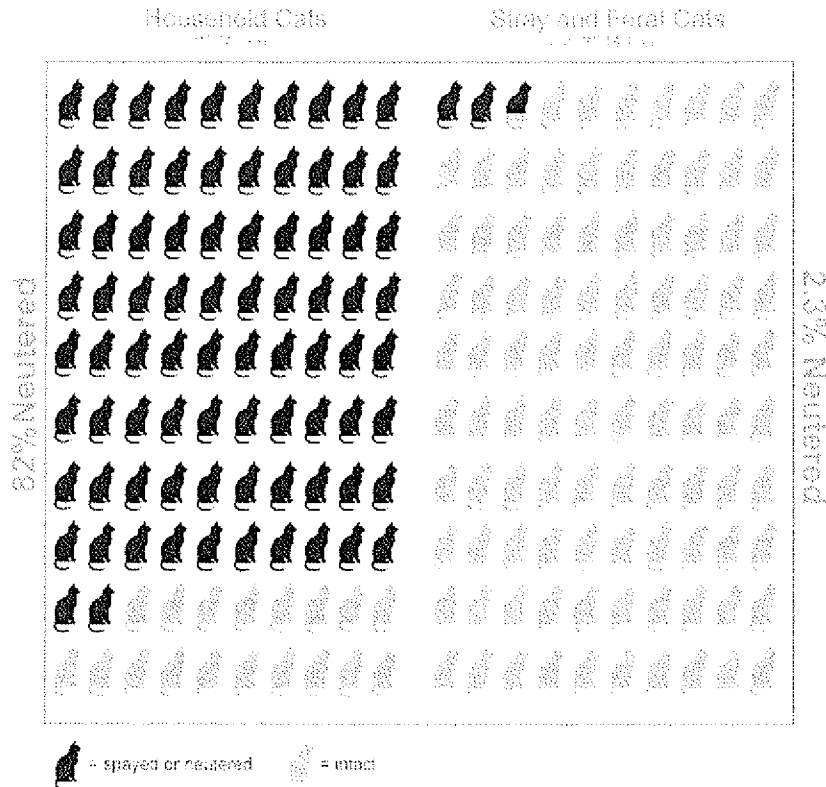
- are a public rabies threat: "cats are now the most common domestic vectors of rabies;"
- decimate wildlife: "free-roaming cats kill millions of wild animals each year;"
- are invasive, non-native intruders: "Cats are not a part of natural ecosystems, and their predation causes unnecessary suffering and death;"
- cause neighborhood strife: "They also cause conflicts among neighbors."

It should go without saying that such denigration of cats is not the role of an organization purportedly founded to protect animals, enforce their rights, and increase their social status, and that therefore shelters and humane activists should ignore such harmful advice.

Missing the Target:

Mandatory Spay/Neuter Legislation Fails to Reach Most Intact Cats

Spay/Neuter Status of U.S. Cat Population



*Additional resources: Hoffman, R. (2007). Pet ownership and the adoption of spay/neuter legislation. *Journal of Human Dimensions of Design*, 1(1), 1-10. <http://www.alleycat.org>*

*Also see: www.alleycat.org for more information on the U.S. cat population and the impact of spay/neuter legislation. *U.S. Cat Population: A Look at the Numbers* (2008) and *U.S. Cat Population: A Look at the Numbers* (2010) are available for free download at www.alleycat.org.*

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Most people agree that increasing the spay/neuter rate of cats in the United States is a worthy goal, and a growing number of communities are considering legislation to accomplish this result. Mandatory spay/neuter legislation (MSN) is frequently discussed, but a look at the demographics of the cat population shows that this approach would not be effective at raising the overall cat neuter rate.

The fundamental problem with MSN is that it targets only the pet cat population—82% of which is already spayed or

neutered—while ignoring that a potentially equally large stray and feral cat population exists, less than 3% of which is neutered. Furthermore, MSN is counterproductive; it spends limited public resources on administrative expenses instead of on spay/neuter programs.

The U.S. Cat Population: Not Just Pet Cats, Stray and Feral Cats Too

The U.S. cat population is made up of both pet cats living in households as well as stray and feral cats living outdoors.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, 82 million cats live in U.S. households.¹ In addition, scientists estimate that the size of the U.S. stray and feral cat population rivals that of the pet cat population.² Scientists are of the opinion that the majority of kittens being born in this country are born to the outdoor cat population.³

Neuter Rates of U.S. Cats

The neuter rates of the two subpopulations of U.S. cats differ significantly. Research indicates that 82% of cats in U.S. households are neutered.⁴ In contrast, less than 3% of stray and feral cats are neutered, according to the most comprehensive study to date.⁵

Any attempt to meaningfully increase the overall cat neuter rate in the United States must address this stark disparity. MSN utterly fails to do so.

MSN Does Not Reach Most Intact Cats

MSN not only ignores the disparity between the neuter rates of the two subpopulations of U.S. cats, but it also overlooks the very existence of the stray and feral cat population. This failure is not surprising given that MSN was developed without regard to demographic data.

In particular, one of the first proponents of MSN erroneously believed that the primary source of kittens in the United States was cat owners who bred their animals.⁶ She argued that it was necessary to pass laws requiring cat owners to sterilize their pets because those owners would not voluntarily stop breeding their animals.⁷ As a result, MSN targets owners of pet cats in an effort to increase the spay/neuter rate—a pointless target given that 82% of pet cats are already neutered.

By ignoring the entire stray and feral cat population, MSN fails to reach what scientists believe is approximately half of the total U.S. cat population – the same half that is more than 97% intact.

MSN Diverts Limited Resources Away from Spay/Neuter Programs

In addition to being ineffective, MSN imposes a financial burden on taxpayers and existing government budgets. MSN attempts to increase the spay/neuter rate by imposing penalties on pet owners. Generally, punishment is the most costly way to accomplish any legislative goal. In the case of MSN, government agencies – and the taxpayers who fund them – may incur the expenses of monitoring owner compliance, issuing citations, collecting fines, or participating in court proceedings for disputed

citations. Tax dollars, in other words, would be used largely for administrative activities and not on actual spay/neuter programs.

Spay/Neuter Programs: a Better Way to Target Intact Cats

A quick look at the demographic data makes this much clear: MSN does not target the vast majority of intact cats, and therefore cannot achieve the goal of increasing the neuter rate of the U.S. cat population.

To have a real impact on the overall neuter rate of U.S. cats, resources should be directed to spay/neuter programs. These programs have become common enough across the country that Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay-Neuter Programs have been published.⁸ Properly designed spay/neuter legislation should support these spay/neuter programs, not MSN.

Endnotes

¹ American Veterinary Medical Association, "U.S. Pet Ownership and Demographics Sourcebook, 2007 Edition," 1, 29 at Table 1-13 (2007).

² E.g., Levy JK, Crawford PC. Humane Strategies for Controlling Feral Cat Populations, *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2004; 225:1354-1360, 1355 at Table 1; see also Levy JK, et al. Number of Unowned Free-roaming Cats in a College Community in the Southern United States and Characteristics of Community Residents Who Feed Them, *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2003; 223:202-205, 204.

³ E.g., Levy JK and Crawford CP. Humane Strategies for Controlling Feral Cat Populations, *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2004; 225:1354-1360, 1355.

⁴ New JC Jr., Salman MD, King M, et al., Characteristics of Shelter-Relinquished Animals and Their Owners Compared With Animals and Their Owners in U.S. Pet-owning Households, *J App Anim Welf Sci* 2000; 3:179-201, 185 at Table 2; see also American Pet Products Manufacturers Association, "2007-2008 APPMA National Pet Owners Survey," 155 at Table 10.

⁵ Wallace, JL, and Levy, JK, Population Characteristics of Feral Cats Admitted to Seven Trap-Neuter-Return Programs in the United States, *J of Feline Medicine and Surgery* 2006; 8:279-284, 282 at Table 3.

⁶ Surla K. "Killing the Crisis, Not the Animal," published by The Fund for Animals (Circa 1991).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Louney AL, et al., The Association of Shelter Veterinarians veterinary medical care guidelines for spay-neuter programs, *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2008; 233:74-86, 74-75.



Franny's Cats Blog

By Franny Woofy, About.com Guide to Cats since 1997

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Alley Cat Allies Opposes MSN (Mandatory Spay/Neuter)

Saturday, March 14, 2009

I'll be going into this more thoroughly in the near future. I have long been in favor of spay & neuter legislation, and "heat" for it in the past. I do believe education is the key, however deplore the "puppy mills" and "kittens farms" w puppies and kittens with complete disregard for protecting and improving breed standards. I'm embarrassed to admit, we purchased one "purebred" dog, a Lhasa Apso, and a "purebred" Manx kitten from pet stores; both were u these backyard breeders.

There are a number of proposed state, local, and federal bills across the U.S. today, for MSN (Mandatory Spay/Neut) with bills governing puppy mills. In fact, there is one pending right now in the [California Legislature](#) - my home sta surprising to discover that the venerable Alley Cat Allies opposes MSN laws. I have not been surprised that breed & exception, oppose these laws. But when a group like ACA opposes them, it certainly got my attention. The [Stats](#) are a real eye-opener. For instance, of the estimated 82 million household cats, 82% are spayed or neutered. Con estimated 82 million stray and feral cats, only 2.3% are neutered. The only flaw I can find in those numbers is: **Where do strays come from? Where did the ancestors of those ferals come from?**

For me, the more compelling argument is that MSN can be fiscally impractical and places an undue burden on taxpayers.

MSN attempts to increase the spay/neuter rate by imposing penalties on pet owners. Generally, punishment is the most costly way to accomplish any legislative goal. In the case of MSN, government agencies - and the taxpayers who fund them - may incur the expenses of monitoring owner compliance, issuing citations, collecting fines, or participating in court proceedings for disputed citations. Tax dollars, in other words, would be used largely for administrative activities and not on actual spay/ neuter programs.

I'm very interested in my readers' opinions about these MSNs. Please vote in the accompanying poll, then post your comments below with your thoughts about these laws.

[Prev](#) [Next](#)

Comments

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(1) Sari Grove says:

March 14, 2009 at 8:55 am

The Australian Alliance for Contraception in Cats & Dogs has developed alternatives to surgical spay & neuter, for animals that cannot undergo a general anaesthetic because of possible heart weakness (many purebreds can have HCM, which can make stress or drugs dangerous...), for animals that were destined for much later breeding-reversible birth controls... for feral animals who may be difficult to catch...for many reasons...these are only a few examples...Fortified by the AACCD, & the holisticpetvet who also had 40 years of regular vet experience, we found a product called Balance made by Phytomet, which contains a low herbal dose of natural progesterone, which keeps animals out of heat cycles...If your pets are same sex, birth control is not necessary, just suppression of annoying heat cycles...Four years later, our ladies still get Balance (from England) in their food daily & are fine...Personally, I wasn't ready to spay because I still wanted children & was transferring- also, I had seen so many very overweight pets, some with diabetes, who seemed to be so sluggish...I was wondering if there were alternatives... Of course, my choice is rare & requires work...I also joined many societies immediately in order to learn about the breed & medical & anecdotal experience...I also got a breeder's certificate, not to be used, but to defend myself from the plethora of rude opinion givers who seem to think my choice not to spay was criminal...I was also tired of people telling me that pets get cancer if you don't remove their sexual organs, thinking that soon, this would be happening to women worldwide... (being told that removing my ovaries, by projection, was best for my future health, was...well...hmmm...)

Anyway, there are alternatives...On the AACCD site they have various products like Neutrosol (sp?) which is injected into a dog's testes without the need for anaesthetic...The dog is neutered without surgery ...This is one development I have read about...

I think if more people try to seek alternatives, we can make having pets a more happy humane experience, rather than a constant suspension of disbelief... For many, with only one pet, who have no intention to breed, a more gentle approach might make everyone feel better...Maybe less expensive too...

Yes, birth control for pets can lead to cysts- but there are now ways to induce excretion of acquired cysts, which might be built into a program...

I just think an open mind & a desire to learn & make the world a better place for pets, will give us new solutions to a real problem...

(2) Susan B. says:

March 14, 2009 at 11:36 am

Don't we have enough government interference in our lives without this? What are they going to do, have raids on anybody who has a pet and inspect them for balls or spay scars? Crazy. I neuter and spay all my cats, but to waste the money in enforcement instead of actually paying for programs to do it is just nuts.

(3) Mary says:

March 15, 2009 at 10:54 am

Education has always been the key. Yes, enough with government interference. I've been doing rescue for 40+ years and when I speak I am still amazed at the "lack" of knowledge people have on the basics of what "but just one litter is OK" means. Most do not even know what TNR is and they especially still don't know what feral means.

As I talk I can usually see the light go on on many faces. Speaking in the schools is best. They are the future and animal knowledge should be mandatory for them. It can help to reduce animal and human abuse as studies have shown.

A lot of my "kids" are FIV after one of my rescues came up positive. I work with the Vet on this issue. I take them and Feiv and other illnesses go to different fosters.

So teaching all by sharing your knowledge casually or thru organized groups is the key.

And government intervention, well does that really need explaining.

And in praise AAA and their information has helped me so many ways as I controlled Feral colonies.

I believe we have all seen that mandatory rarely gets the job done.

(4) Louise says:

March 15, 2009 at 12:19 pm

Hi Franny...that figure (82% of all cats are fixed) is not strictly accurate. "While the spay rate is high, especially in owned cats, all is not wonderful. Roughly 19% of the female cats had a litter prior to being spayed. This falls in line with the 16-20% of females which had a litter prior to being spayed found in other studies.[9], [10],[11] Far and away these were accidental pregnancies, which NPA dubbed the "oops factor." The oops factor accounted for 58.3% of the pregnancies before spaying.

This is taken from the National Pet Alliance actual study. Several studies were done, and all showed roughly the same numbers. About 20% of "Eventually spayed" cats had litters prior to being spayed.

(5) Jo says:

March 15, 2009 at 12:34 pm

I'm with Alley Cat Allies. Mandatory spay/neuter laws sound good on the surface and appeal to those looking for a quick fix, but what they do is shift resources from programs that work to enforcement. Before I started researching them I thought I would support them but the evidence is against blanket mandatory s/n laws. History has proven that they do not work. I'd like to see more programs like the one instituted in Delaware in October 2008. It's modelled after the New Hampshire program which had overwhelming success and includes these three elements: 1)Govt. subsidized spay/neuter program; 2)Mandatory spay/neuter of animals adopted from shelters; 3) Up to \$250,000 tax credit for veterinarians participating in the program. There is also supposed to be a performance review committee to monitor the effectiveness of this program as to its impact on shelter intake and euthanasia, which is very important, as we need better evidence of what is effective and what is not.

(6) Franny Syufy says:

March 15, 2009 at 2:04 pm

Thanks for all the thoughtful comments, Louise, your comments are particularly helpful with regard to litters prior to spaying. Do you have Web links to any of those studies you cited?

Jo, similar question: do you have links to the New Hampshire and/or Delaware programs?

As I mentioned on my blog, I intend to develop this issue into a full-fledged article, but my readers will need links, not just my (or someone else's) word, to be convinced of the validity of my arguments.

(7) Bucky's Rescue says:

March 15, 2009 at 3:57 pm

Whether we all want it or not -- legislation of effective laws to spay/neuter companion animals is presently the only way to prevent the endless problems we face with out of control animal populations in this country. Humans created this trouble and we need to fix it. I have seen first hand, the needless suffering of innocent creatures when nothing is done to curb rampant breeding. Until we create something better -- spay/neuter laws will help to solve the problem that desperately needs solution right now!

(8) Theresa Swallick says:

March 15, 2009 at 10:58 am

I work with a group of people who do the TNR program on Sundays. We have veterinarians who volunteer along with all their other co-workers and volunteers for this project. Finding those who will feed, provide shelters and water, is an on-going job. On Thursdays they trap, Sunday spay/neuter, 2 days later the cats go back to their colony. If any need further medical attention, it, too, will be given. We need more people who will give of their time and energies to help these feral cats-- some are even friendly--dropped off by someone who no longer wants them and are still able to be saved and adopted. Some of the kittens of these feral cats, if little enough, can be fostered and adopted out. People made this problem by "putting out" the cat at night knowing they can reproduce and did nothing about it. It is time they are made to carry out the burden of their carelessness.

(9) Diane Blackman says:

March 15, 2009 at 11:19 am

It isn't the people that pay the price for mandatory spay and neuter. It is the cats who die. People who risk fines will choose not to care for them at all. Meanwhile animal control continues their catch and kill policy.

(10) Dennis says:

March 15, 2009 at 11:47 am

I'm not sure.

(11) Ruby Ridge says:

March 15, 2009 at 11:44 am

If you can pass S/N legislation for animals, it's only a matter of time before the federal government passes legislation for humans. Given the shambles our economy is in and the over running of our country by illegal immigrants, it is not if, but when.

(12) Hannah says:

March 15, 2009 at 11:11 am

Most of the cats killed in shelters never had an owner. Most were no one's "problem." They are in the shelter because the "better off dead" crowd would rather they die than that they face the life any wild animal faces. I've always wondered why their "humane" stance does not include capturing and exterminating every racoon, possum, squirrel, fox, deer ... they can get their hands on. I love alley cat allies. They help without killing.

(13) Sue says:

March 15, 2009 at 11:22 am

I think it would be nearly impossible to enforce. Requiring shelter adoptions to be spayed or neutered would be practical (just make it part of the fee and do it before they're handed over); so would free spay/neuter programs like the one in Ohio's Summit County (http://www.ohio.com/news/top_stories/03/23/09.html) or tax incentives (going back to Franny's earlier blog entry about deductible pet care). I'm not comfortable with the amount of privacy I'd have to give up to prove my

cats are spayed and neutered (and have rabies shots, which is mandatory and probably would be on the same checks), or the amount of money I'm sure I'd get charged to run the government's inspection program. Besides, bribery always seems to work better than punishment, and then everybody's happy. ☺

(14) Deb says:

March 17, 2009 at 11:09 am

I oppose madatory spay/neutering, not only because of the ridiculousness of trying to enforce such a law, but it's also too much government interference. I've lived in places (around the world) where feral cats were beneficial at keeping the rat population down.

I am also concerned, that if such a program were successful, we would be left with ONLY purebred cats. That would such a shame, as IMHO purebred animals are not as strong as animals who are the product of a larger gene pool. Mixed-breed cats are so much more beautiful in their variety and easier to live with.

People ARE becoming more responsible on their own. I'd never heard of neutering cats when I was growing up, and there were always neighbors with litters of cats.

Let's make laws controlling people who actually do deliberately and physically abuse animals, not someone who lets Fluffy get knocked-up by the neighbor's tom cat.

(15) Jo Thurman says:

March 17, 2009 at 6:40 am

In answer to your question Franny, yes I have links to information about the New Hampshire and Delaware programs as well as others which you might be interested in for your research. Apparently, however, I cannot post them here in a comment.

(16) Kathie says:

March 18, 2009 at 3:20 am

I am always shocked that ANYONE who truly loves animals would not be for MSN. I have done rescue for 30 years and have seen enough sadness for 5 lifetimes. People who want pure bred and not rescue pure bred, and people who find neutering and spaying unnatural are selfish, pure and simple. As far as saying they get lazy, fat, diabetes, etc.. if 82% of owned animals are now fixed (although I find that percentage high), wouldn't the majority of them have diabetes, be fat, or lazy? Ridiculous! I think there should be strong laws against breeding animals, where as there can only be a certain number of licensed breeders of a certain breed and if found breeding not licensed, stiff penalties, and I feel that NO ONE should have an animal unneutered or unsplayed. Certainly I sound like a nut to some but come take a walk with me over the past 30 years and see what I have seen, all due to stupid people letting their cats get pregnant or get others pregnant. Then there are always the people who say "we can't afford it" If you can't afford it, don't buy the pet.

(17) Kathie says:

March 18, 2009 at 1:07 pm

And I totally disagree that most cats in shelters were never owned. That would mean most are feral. Not so. Again, take a walk though a city pound on any day of the week or a rescue shelter and see the many stories and excuses that lame people came up with to get rid of something they used to love but have no use for anymore

(18) Debbie says:

March 18, 2009 at 12:51 am

Having been in rescue now for almost 10 years, I cannot support MANDATORY s/n as proposed here in the State of Illinois. If people who don't want to s/n their pets face being fined and/or having pets confiscated, they will either 1) NOT take their animals to the vet so that they don't have to comply or 2) abandon them because they cannot afford it. This leads to animals who are not vetted properly, abandoned animals, or shelters being overcome (like we're not already) by relinquished animals. Spend the money on low cost or free s/n programs and LOTS of publicity about how to take advantage of the programs. People are already abandoning their animals (s/n or NOT) because of economics conditions. This will make it worse!

(19) jessica says:

March 18, 2009 at 11:57 am

I think I'm in favor of the proposition, but I really would like to learn more about both sides. On the surface it does sound good and I'm really curious why such a fine organization as ACA does not support it. I agree with the poster that people created the animal over population problem and we need to fix it. I think we are a LONG ways away from seeing the common, mixed-breed cat from becoming extinct. If this proposal ever does go into law, we can re-evaluate it again when the pounds begin to stop taking in animals. Ideally, every animal should be considered too valuable and precious to euthanize. As for the argument that people will not take their cats into the vet for proper treatment for fear that they will be fined, I'm not so sure about. I mean, if a pet owner is not responsible enough to spay/neuter their cat, they are probably not responsible enough to properly care for it anyway. Besides, what about all the kittens a cat in such a household could potentially bring into the world? What about the sort of lives they will live? For now, I'm in favor of mandatory spay/neuter. I'm looking forward to your article Frann, so that I can make a more informed decision. thanks.

(20) A Friend to Cats says:

March 19, 2009 at 1:10 am

MSN SOUNDS good, but when you look at the communities that have tried it, you find that it's costly, difficult if not impossible to enforce, and results in more abandoned animals, either on the streets or in shelters.

When communities would work with shelters, rescues, and national advocacy orgs to offer free or low-cost SN -- that's what works. You have to: advertise/promote/educate adequately and persuasively target the neighborhoods/populations who often don't SN offer incentives (free or discounted vaccinations, pet food, freebies from pet supply store make it easy (free transport for those without cars, etc)

If government would put some of the money currently going toward animal "control" and the proposed funds earmarked for MSN, these programs could be paid for -- and then start paying for themselves.

Part of what a program like this also does is reshape the way people view their pets. When it becomes more common and accepted for virtually all pets to be spayed and neutered, there will be less resistance to it.

(21) Barbara says:

March 19, 2009 at 11:24 am

Frankly, it is frightening to me to think that the great, long arm of the law...would be able to reach out and tell me how many kittens I can have, what to feed them, how to breed my adults, what they need in general...The governments (both National and Local) have their hands full trying to keep our economies from being devastated now. California, is one of the most hard pressed governmental bodies in the country and certainly doesn't need to add more expense and dictatorial diatribe to its list of events. The border states already have more than their share of responsibilities to handle...without placing pet ghurus in their midst to tell those of us who are responsible and qualified to raise our animals. I find it reprehensible to even think about. There will always be irresponsible, abusive people 'out there' who ignore everything decent for our beloved animals...But they are the ones who don't obey the laws already...Why, Franni, would you think they would be

more responsive to new laws. The rest of us do a great job of notifying the authorities about those people now...and their ARE laws which punish them and remove the animals from them. There are so many people who know what they have within their care. It is called stepping up to the plate and accepting responsibility for Self and others...It doesn't happen through overzealous legislation by political 'types' who seem to feel they know all about everything...there is to know. I will never support this type of legislation in any form. I know so many outstanding breeders and pet owners and it isn't the job of the 'law' to teach them about being loving, caring pet owners. It falls right in with the Abortion issue as far as I'm concerned. It is not the business of Government.

(22) Elaine Dunbar says:

March 10, 2009 at 2:00 pm

The key here is to educate the public that spay/neuter is the way to go and to support government programs which assist owners who cannot afford to spay/neuter their companions.

We have sufficient government mandates already.

Thankx for letting me speak my piece.

(23) Anastasia says:

March 10, 2009 at 2:11 pm

Just spayed a cat 2 days ago! Making it MANDATORY to shell out the 170 sucks to get it done, yeah right, I'm with the rest of the rescuers, fix the throw away mentality & help provide programs for Low cost surgeries and allow the vet to do their JOB without fear of retaliation Yes my cat had just gone through a heat cycle with the obvious consequences but the vet in THIS country was allowed to spay her anyways versus many places in the U.S. they would be required to stop and close up! MY Family in the U.S. seriously disagreed with my planning to bring a kitten over that my children had found & tamed and unfortunately they released it BEFORE the spay date, it was an inconvenience for them. I'm just glad the rest of the litter went to rescue and that they got "done" but that baby never will & neither will the mother probably, even though she's tame. THAT'S the problem, not mandatory laws for pet owners, but the concept that a cat is disposable. Unless you spend thousands on it....

(24) Edil says:

March 10, 2009 at 2:24 pm

SOMEONE MOST READ ALEX HUXLEY NOVEL 1984 .OPEN YOUR EYES AND EARS THIS LOOKS LIKE WHAT IS GOING IN CHINA THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO CONTROL EVERYTHING IN YOUR LIVES,THIS IS CRAZY.I used to have 10 cats ,only have one now,all of them were s\y as thy came of due time or age,What we must try to achive is education at all levels specially at schools ,the earlier we start the better,but the problem is that you are not supposed to talk about sex and reproduction to CHILDREN adn that is another ,problem

(25) Jennifer says:

March 10, 2009 at 4:16 pm

Very interesting topic! I agree with the majority here; education and incentives are key to encouraging humane and responsible treatment of animals. I've worked in a "no-kill" shelter in a more affluent, generally educated (and more "liberal") area, and then moved to a more conservative, historically agricultural part of the state that is becoming more urbanized and populated. I was appalled at the difference in attitude, and also at the distressingly lower level of animal services. We've adopted 4 kittens over the last 2 years, two who were going to be dumped at an overcrowded shelter, and two who were wandering (abandoned with a littermate at approximately 5 weeks old) in the parking lot of a business in a very high-traffic area. We're not terribly well-off, but would rather share than turn a blind eye. Calls to shelters only met with "we're not accepting animals" and the runaround to get assistance with S/N is ridiculous. The vet in the "rougher" part of the city was most realistic, allowing walk-ins for testing which was essential before we could care for them at home with our other cats. (Of course, we ended up battling a URI among all 7 anyway!) All of my cats have always been spayed/neutered, all indoor, and all adopted in need. They are happy and healthy now, but despite the laws, not because of them (limit on the number of cats per household). So I know firsthand that people who can neither afford to spay and neuter nor get assistance from shelters will leave animals in the hope that they will have at least a chance. We know how few those chances are - more laws won't make them any better. Alley Cat Allies sounds like a very intelligent, compassionate group of people with the right idea. Education and encouragement should include caretakers at all income levels.

(26) Doug says:

March 10, 2009 at 4:56 pm

This shouldn't be a taxpayer thing, but I think the best solution is to partner with local animal shelters and have feral animal hunts. Here's how it works:

1. Find an animal.
2. Capture it.
3. Knock it out.
4. Spay/neuter it.
5. Release.

It's like hunting, but for a good cause! Legislation shouldn't tell us what to do/not do with our pets (well, aside from the obvious like abuse)... this should be a grassroots thing.

(27) Doug says:

March 10, 2009 at 4:59 pm

Forget the legislation... local groups need to organize catch/neuter/release activities. It's like hunting, but for a good cause!

(28) Suzanne Williams says:

March 10, 2009 at 7:12 pm

Education is definitely the key but it is not working.Check out the statistics for the number of cats and kittens put down every year because no home could be found for them.As a responsible pet owner my cats have always been neutered or spayed,including my SHOW Siamese and my adopted strays.It is the only answer.I now have an 8 month old Persian from Champion and Grand Champion Lines and a feral kitten I saved from some children who had killed the mama and left 5 kittens approximately 2 weeks old to die.I bottle fed the babies and found them homes(except the one I kept for a companion for my Persian)My Persian may be bred.Every time I go to his doctor,I run into a Persian Breeder who begs for just one mating with my baby.He is being neutered this week and only this late because his allergies have been so bad his doctor did not want to anesthesize him.I have always refused to mate this magnificent SHOW cat because there are too many unwanted cats already.Go out and give a FOREVER home to a cat or kitten at your local ASPCA.Do I believe in mandatory newter and spay?Yes,definitely.But there must be some allowances made for careful breeders who are trying to improve a breed,otherwise I would not have my magnificent Black Persian who is best friends with my adopted feral kitty.When my human children were younger,one of them accidently let a cat outside.I had saved this cat from torture and a certain death and I loved him dearly.My husband and I must have put up over 1000 posters offering \$1,000.00 dollars for his return.We definitely were not rich,in fact we had very little but when we saved this cat from his torturer,we promised him a lifetime of love to make it up to him.We also ran ads in the paper.We went to the local ASPCA every single day looking for him.One day I went to the shelter and the man who worked there let me inAs I walked into the back,I looked into this large room on the side.I saw 5(five)large wheelbarrows filled with heaped up dead

animals. I was told that these were the animals that had been put down because no one had adopted them. This was a small town. Think of how many are out there every day. I still have NIGHTMARES over that sight. I believe in mandatory spay and neuter with allowances made for careful breeders who are trying to maintain or improve a line..

(29) Jill says:

March 18, 2009 at 9:02 am

Our local Humane Society spays and neuters all arrivals, starting at a few weeks of age. They provide free s/n and ID for all low income pet owners, and for all feral/stray cats brought in by people feeding them. (tnr) Animals must be s/n before being adopted. This policy, combined with a drive to encourage people to get their pets from the Humane Society rather than elsewhere can help reduce pet population. People need to be educated not to buy animals from pet stores at all and not to shop at pet stores that sell puppies or kittens.

Also, in my experience many shelter animals were brought in because of landlord problems. It is almost impossible for renters to find a landlord who will allow pets. Also the "just one litter before spaying" is a problem that needs to be discussed constantly. People don't get the math or logic. They think if they find homes for the litter it's ok, and that females need to have a litter. Yet I have female cats who never had a litter and are perfectly happy. So education, spay/neuter services and possibly also mandatory spay neuter laws combined.

(30) Carol Gibbs says:

March 20, 2009 at 12:10 am

I don't believe that legislating, or forcing people to spay and neuter their animals is right. Educate and give incentives, but don't legislate or force. We're over legislated as it is.

(31) Ross P. says:

March 20, 2009 at 4:50 am

The debate shouldn't end with the proper extent of government regulation. If most owned cats are incapable of reproduction and MSN is moderately successful, what will be the effect on the genetic pool for house cats for my great grandchildren? There is adequate genetic diversity today in the kitty gene pool, but leaving maintenance of that diversity in the hands of pedigree breeders and back yard kitten farms is not optimum. MSN has the potential to produce that result.

(32) Linda says:

March 20, 2009 at 2:49 am

I am concerned that the legislation might be a way to force the starvation of feral cat colonies that a sometimes fed by local caretakers (out of their own pockets). In some states (I believe Florida is one) the law seems to state that if you feed an animal it is yours and then you are responsible for getting it spayed or neutered which may be impossible either financially or even to catch some of these kitties without professional help and funding from agencies that have the knowhow, funds and time. Senior citizens and others who feed these colonies cannot be held responsible for the expense of spay or neutering or they will discontinue feeding them and then some of the cats will inevitably die from starvation especially in cold climates like New England.

(33) KAT says:

March 21, 2009 at 10:36 am

I do not agree with the MSN laws because if the responsible breeders that are producing good purebred cats are punished by heavy fines, many will be forced to shut down and it will become nearly impossible to purchase a purebred cat for showing or even if you desire one for a pet. I am also involved with breed specific cat rescue as well as the cat show scene. Also if you are involved with showing and your cat is fixed, you must show in the premier class instead of the champion class. I have found that the breeders that you find at a show are generally very responsible. The problems come from the bad breeders such as puppy and kitty mills that produce genetic defects and inferior quality puppies and cats.

(34) Sandra says:

March 21, 2009 at 11:24 am

I am all for spaying and neutering our cats. I have three girls all spayed. What worries me about this idea is what about those with low incomes and others that can't afford to have their pet spayed or neutered? We need more low cost spay and neuter clinics to help those who may not be able to afford the high price of the surgeries. For some people it just costs so much.

(35) marta gasper says:

March 23, 2009 at 1:00 pm

I voted depends on the terms because from what I've seen it varies with the particular local it'll be applied to. I agree it shouldn't be where taxpayer money goes to s/n programs b/c it would detract from it thereby giving the law a bad name. But in places, such as where I live, where there are no s/n programs at all, other than ordinary citizens that pay of our own pocket so not only ferals but our neighbors roaming cats can be s/ned so that no more ferals will be born (that'll be the day, etc) it'd be nice if there was a mandatory s/n law. Granted many can't afford it, that people is forgiven in my view. But other owners can, what's 2 cats and a dog compared to 20 cats + our own at home!! It would stop all that backyard breeding as a sideeffect. Second con is reinforcement..but at least it is an start if it was mandatory..with exceptions for low-income, disabilities, etc where other people could chip in. All that said in my personal case I wouldn't want it 70 mi from where I am. There taxpayers money goes to s/n programs.

(36) marta says:

March 23, 2009 at 1:20 pm

I voted and commented but it isn't showing yet. Anyways mandatory s/n can work in some places; ie I would love to have it in my rural town. There's nothing as for s/n programs, lo cost clinics, etc. Ferals and strays are cared for individuals. Many hardly think of s/ning their pet (who roams and produces more of the same and ferals) A mandatory s/n law would hardly change people taking a pet to the vet.. However I don't see it in a place just 70 mi from here where things are completely different.

(37) Kathie says:

March 26, 2009 at 1:29 am

Fourteen years ago I started a Cat Rescue organization for TNR and adoption of abandoned and cats able to be socialized. I completely support mandatory S/N Laws. Enforcement is another story. I have never in 14 years give out a kitten or cat that has not been altered. The kittens are fostered until 10 to 12 weeks when then can be altered. Anyone asking for "the youngest kitten" available for adoption won't get it from me until it is altered. But, I know for a fact that there are numerous unscrupulous "rescue" people that make their money by adopting out cute, cuddly infant kittens that are too young for the average person to care for. Their argument is this is what the public wants. Too Bad! The average public doesn't alter and ultimately will throw out or put in a shelter a cat that reaches maturity and goes into heat or sprays. These people who don't support mandatory S/N Laws and the pompous Alley Cat Allies that only choose to support causes that will bring press or large donations should see the tragedies I have dealt with over the years. But I am sure that those that make a "living" off of cats and dogs will never allow this law to pass.

(38) Joanna Harkin says:

April 1, 2009 at 11:00 am

Before cats are left/put outside, people call for help, but there is little customer service in the field of animal welfare — not from large organizations; not from small ones. Little advice or suggestions are given callers about which shelters might be best and how to access rescue local rescue groups or how to find a good home for animals. So momma kitty is left out and becomes the matriarch of a new crop of neighborhood cats. Feral cats come from a lack of customer service on the part of organizations — often some generations back. I would like to see more attention paid to helping callers place animals safely and put a website together with tips (Google my name — Joanna Harkin — to locate). Organizations need to answer calls and walk/talk people through their particular and peculiar unique situations.

(39) Emily says:

April 3, 2009 at 5:01 pm

I am for the IDEA of mandatory spay and neuter, but it needs to be a great program, perhaps incentive based at first. Wouldn't it be much less expensive for the tax payers to provide low cost spay and neuter surgeries than pay the fees of running a shelter? The amount of lives that are thrown away, the amount of suffering is so great that a few classroom visits aren't going to offset the damage.

I think the gov't should make breeding licenses available for the responsible, professional breeders that can prove they are breeding with health in mind as well as looks. (So many purebreds have genetic problems because of careless breeding.)

Something has to change. If people REALLY cared about their animals they wouldn't have a problem getting them fixed. Although in their defense, the public for the most part has NO IDEA how bad it truly is in the shelters. We need images of the realities of shelter life as promotional material to wake people up — I'm talking about the refrigerators stuffed with dead dogs, the black trash "body" bags being hauled to the dump, the piles and piles of dead cats, the gas chambers where groups of animals are put to fight it out until death... I could go on and on. It is disgusting out there and something has to change. Why not MSN?

(40) The Rage says:

June 4, 2009 at 11:29 am

We had TNR in the City of Columbia AND West Columbia, SC. We were lied to by the local pounds that our colonies were "safe". I never trusted them BUT one naive individual named where the colonies were thinking they would be protected. ALL the cats were rounded up and killed. Because they were not "licensed" by our local government authorities. West Columbia went even further. After losing a court case by jury decision, they "retaliated" against ALL rescuers and TNR calling it "abandonment of animals". It is required that YOU have your cat on a tether OR in a large cage outside. To feed a stray cat can be reason for arrest. It is ILLEGAL to even "help" an injured feral animal. ALL animals trapped and brought to their shared facility near Cayce (pronounced Casey) South Carolina are IMMEDIATELY put down. The police will fine and arrest you for burying your pet in the backyard. Three police cars were dispatched to harass and fine two ladies who were were taking care of two spayed cats behind an old grocery store.

It is ILLEGAL to feed your OWN cat on YOUR front porch. ACA sent everyone of their city counsel persons literature packets and dvd's on the benefits of TNR. The council, in-turn, used the ACA website against anyone that practices TNR. One poor lady with cancer, a Sandra Broadway, had the solitary dog catcher patrol around and around her home, in a 10 mpg tax=payer provided ALL day long even stopping to chase her cats out into the street so they could fine her. (they were all spay, neutered, vaccinated.) When a neighbor confronted the dog catcher, a Mz Horbacher, about her harassment of an old lady/didn't SHE the ACO have nothing else to do, regular police came and fined the gentleman for "interference" with a city "official".

Where did these draconian laws come from. A crack-pot, 40 year old, mal-content who thought ALL cats should be inside and who told everyone "You have YOUR truth...I have mine". Oh yea, she was from California. She lobbied and complained and whined until the Council gave in to her every whim and whimsy.

Point is. Anytime you start passing "mandatory pet laws", licensing or the rest, you only punish the GOOD people, NOT the bad. AND in this case, the TRUE rescuers were persecuted, along with their wards (the cats) because they primarily didn't ASK NOR NEED the government's permission OR assistance. Private INITIATIVE was punished.

Oh yea, the murder, robbery, and rape percentages have INCREASED in Columbia and West Columbia, and the number of kills at the local pounds have also increased WHILE resources are wasted pursuing the "good people".

Oh yea, the Asilomar Accord, the document passed a few years back, which sounds on the surface in favor of TNR, actually states that all private groups are to give way to the will of the government without question.

Asilomar California that is. YOU that are for forcing people I have ONE thing to say. A quote from an old 70's song..

"He can't run his own life, I'll be DAMNED if he runs MINE!" NO, I'm in favor of legislation FORCING EVERY single dog pound to FULLY WORK, Assist, and in every way COOPERATE with the PRIVATE SECTOR, with that same PRIVATE SECTOR having the power of Binding Recommendation over said pounds/so-called shelters!. No more should we stand for being mistreated and persecuted. No more should people like the current "director" "Marly" of the Columbia, SC City Animal Control be ALLOWED to call we in the private sector "Bunny Huggers".

To government...COMPLETE TRANSPARENCY and OPENESS.. Put some control (checks and balances) ON YOUR SELF FIRST..

If I sound like I have an axe to grind, that axe has been sharp ever since I spent the day in JAIL for reporting an abuser keeping captured cats in traps for three days without food or water or out of the sun. City of Columbia, SC Traps...That was 5 years ago..AND things have only gotten worse with ALL the new legislation.

Keep your ideas for MANDATES to YOURSELF!

(41) Diane says:

June 10, 2009 at 3:07 pm

We had a stray kitten adopt our house and later weasled her way into our home pregnant. Fortunately she only had 2 kittens. A couple months later, she promptly went into heat. We paid \$170 and bought back our sanity. Now we have the dilemma of the two kittens she had. I will not do what someone else did and dump them on someone not looking to be a cat owner but I think it is very unfair that there are not resources out there for people like us who are willing to do the right thing but have to pay for it when I really needed to pay a bill.

(42) Jstallred says:

October 21, 2009 at 10:02 am

I have to agree with someone else down the list. How can you say you love animals but do not support mandatory spay & neuter. That doesn't make any sense. Stop by a local shelter on house cleaning day. The line after line of loving and scared out of their minds pets. And where did the info that says most cats in the shelters were homeless to start with? I see tag after tag with a losers excuse of why they sent their pet to die. I even saw a tag that said "We got a new kitten".

Who said anything about "door to door raids"? Has anybody on here accusaly read the guidelines? It doesn't include those who go to the vet for care. It doesn't include a door to door. It says if Animal control were to be called to your home. It doesn't include purebred pets or service animals or even pets under 6 months old. And this so called "Government involvement". Apparently we are not able to handle matters on our own or this would not even be considered a problem. Oh

yeah, the "tax payers money" thing. Our County Animal Shelter works from Monday thru Friday, 9am to 5pm. I don't think they will spend one more minute of their time after that to give out extra fines to citizens when they will not see one dime of it.

I do agree that the government should offer help in spay and neuter programs. However in many cities you can find some help. If you take the time to look. Asking one friend from work doesn't count.

Take the time to read all of the rules and regulations, get your heads out of your butts, get your animals fixed and support the MSN laws. Like I said, spend some time volunteering at a shelter. Humans aren't even smart enough to control our own population and you want us to take on other species? Good luck with that.
Jstallired

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We The People

THE BIG LIE: SANTA CRUZ

15 December 2007

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SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT FOR AB1634 - CALIFORNIA'S "UN-HEALTHY" PET ACT

Recently Amber, a California Healthy Pets Act blogger new to the scene (and to California) wrote " Bill Hemby Chairman of PetPAC has lied so many times about AB1634 California's Healthy Pets ACT that we lost count." Since my curiosity was piqued, I thought I would click on the link. What to my wondering eyes did appear but a sad-faced doggie behind bars with a message "HE NEEDS OUR HELP."

Now, that's a surprise. It is a similar sad-faced doggie just like the ones "used" by the Humane Society of the United States when they are soliciting for their donation du jour. We all know by now the woman-behind- the-man-behind- the-bill, but please add PETA and the Humane Society of the United States to the list of organizations working fast and furious behind the scenes of California Assembly Bill 1634 to remove Fluffy and Fido from the family photo!

'Tis the season so I read on. New blogger (obviously drinking kool-aid from the California Healthy Pet punchbowl) writes: "LET'S SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT."

Imagine my disappointment when new blogger failed to accomplish her goal. She presented "lies". She presented "facts". She did NOT present the truth!!

Since I had some time on my hands between decorating the tree and wrapping presents for my dog's extensive list of canine friends, I thought "I" would help to set the record straight. I did have to take a break or two to pop more non-vegan cookies into the oven and slice a ham for our holiday gathering with friends this evening, but the importance of setting the record straight kept my fingers busily clicking away on the keyboard.

New blogger is most concerned with the nature of PetPAC. Perhaps new blogger needs to delve more deeply into the nature of Social Compassion in Legislation instead, a key supporter of AB1634. Principals are Judie Mancuso, her husband Rolf Wicklund, Jane Garrison, and her husband (the chiropractor?) Mark Garrison. I do think a few of those names are PETA-esque. I wonder if they are on Ingrid Newkirk's and Wayne Pacelle's Christmas card lists. (Is Christmas a vegan holiday?)

Why does Social Compassion in Legislation want to be just a figurehead supporter asking for donations ("click to donate")? Wouldn't you think they would want financial contributors to know all about their good works so that those potential contributors could delve deeper into their pockets this holiday season and SEND MONEY? If you have free time, google Social Compassion in Legislation. You will find bubkus! [also spelled bubkes or bupkis ... means you will find "nothing at all"]

I thought I would share some further insight into the "coalition". By the way, I have heard on numerous occasions by Ms. Mancuso that "hers" is a

Republican coalition. Do you honestly think the puppies and kitties care if you vote Democrat or Republican?

A recent press event held in Los Angeles by Lloyd Levine and "legendary" television star Bob Barker and members of the coalition informed one and all of the return of this blithering bill. Senators have had to ask Santa for fax machines throughout the State to accommodate the ensuing piles of SUPPORT or OPPOSITION faxes soon to arrive with the New Year.

The Associated Press had another report recently (14 Dec) that I thought I would share with you:

"PRICE WAS RIGHT, BUT THE CAR WAS WRONG, CONTESTANT SAYS"

According to a lawsuit filed this week in Los Angeles Superior Court, in June 2004, a contestant on "The Price Is Right" guessed that a sports car was worth \$33,495 and left the stage thinking she had just won a new 2004 Pontiac GTO Coupe. In her lawsuit against the game show, CBS Broadcasting, the auto dealership that provided the vehicle and the transportation company that delivered it, the contestant alleges the GTO Coupe she received was not new, as she had been promised, and had been in an accident. When she took the car, which arrived in her home state of Washington in September 2004, in for service the next year, she was told that it had suffered structural damage to the frame and front end, "but the repair work was such that an obvious effort had been made to conceal or hide the damage."

OOPS!

For full text of above referenced AP article, please click here:

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/state/20071214-1638-ca-wrongcar.html>>

Okay, where was I? Oh, I remember. Back to setting the record straight.

Let's chat awhile about pet overpopulation. Do you know that there is actually a **SHORTAGE OF ADOPTABLE DOGS** in the United States? Let me repeat for those AB1634 "supporters" who might be reading challenged.

*There is actually a **SHORTAGE OF ADOPTABLE DOGS** in the United States!!*

Do you know that there is a prison program offered by the Marin Humane Society?

Oh, I see a potential problem looming.

Perhaps the California Healthy Pet "supporters" are geographically challenged and are NOT aware that the Marin Humane Society is located in CALIFORNIA!!

Perhaps the California Healthy Pet "supporters" are NOT aware that the Marin Humane Society is located in NOVATO, CALIFORNIA, only 100 miles from Santa Cruz, CA, the sacred capitol of all things right with sheltering according to Assembly Member Lloyd Levine and the coalition.

What's that? You don't remember Santa Cruz being a role model to

emulate?

Just this week it was announced in Santa Cruz County that their Animal Services Authority General Manager, Katherine Vos, was ousted! Loyal shelter workers staged a sickout. Both volunteers and employees were AFRAID TO SPEAK TO THE MEDIA ... for fear of losing their jobs!

Why is that? What could possibly be gleaned by this change in command in Santa Cruz? Someone wouldn't be trying to "conceal or hide" anything, would they?

In response to the article about Katherine Vos leaving Santa Cruz, I thought I would do a bit of my own homework. Here is some interesting information straight from the minutes of the Santa Cruz Board meetings:

Dec 2007: It is announced that Animal Services Authority (ASA) General Manager, Katherine Vos, will leave in January 2008. [Was it politically motivated???]

Let's go back.

April 2007: Newly appointed General Manager to the ASA, Katherine Vos, is introduced to the Board.

May 2007: Lisa Carter, Executive Director of the SPCA, encouraged the board to endorse the California Healthy Pet Act, AB 1634. [This is the same woman who just happened to call-in to the recent KGO radio program with Judie Mancuso. Interesting how Lisa always gets on every radio program that Ms. Mancuso is doing. To be fair, KGO's radio host did describe Lisa as "one of her dearest friends."]

To continue setting the record straight, the County of Santa Cruz took over animal-control services and the bulk of sheltering in 2002 amid a FINANCIAL SCANDAL at the local SPCA. The SPCA now serves as an advocacy and education group but does NOT handle shelters!! (see below)

Financial scandal? Doesn't handle shelters?

OOPS!

At the Board meeting in May, Ms. Carter passed out a copy of the California Healthy Pet Act and a list of sponsors and supporters. Please note the following:

BOARD ACTION: The Board recommended staff put this item on the next agenda for a vote with a copy of the bill and a comprehensive analysis. [If Santa Cruz has been consistently touted as Lloyd Levine's "model," then wouldn't they jump at the chance to support the bill? This appears odd to me.]

Annette Hogue, Watsonville Shelter Volunteer wanted to show her support for the California Healthy Pet Act, AB 1634. Sammy Ettenger, SPCA, explained the difference in understanding of the California Healthy Pet Act, AB 1634. Lynne Achterberg, Project Purr, handed out their newsletter. [And "still" the Board took no action to "support" the bill despite the fact that Santa Cruz is the RECOMMENDED STATE ROLE MODEL for the California Healthy Pet Act?]

Let's look further.

June 2007: **BOARD ACTION:** Take no action on the bill at this time. Board directed General Manager to draft a letter with comments in regards to Santa Cruz ordinance verses the AB1634 bill. [Even though "supporters" were pushing AB1634 down the throats of the Board members via feeding tube, the BOARD STILL TOOK NO ACTION!]

Sept 2007: **BOARD ACTION: Accept and file report and directed the ASA General Manager to bring back to the board an update on efforts made to decrease the euthanasia rates at the Santa Cruz County Animal Services Authority Shelters.**

[What's this? Santa Cruz needs to DECREASE THEIR RATE OF EUTHANASIA? Do you think Lloyd Levine knows about this? Do you think Lloyd Levine cares? Let's go a bit further down memory lane together, shall we? Gotta set the record straight!]

May 2003: On April 26, 2003 through April 28, 2003, the Santa Cruz Sentinel published an expose of the issues surrounding the Santa Cruz SPCA and how it led to the creation of the ASA. In addition to the SPCA article of April 26th, an article regarding the status of the ASA and it's role in the delivery of animal services was published. These articles have drawn considerable attention to the agency.

OOPS!! An expose? Missing funds? Corruption? And shelter shutdown?

Sept 2003: **FIELD SERVICES:** In late September, with a full complement of Animal Control staff on board, we will be refining our animal control dispatch services with a training day on the enhanced uses of our Chameleon animal control data base system. In addition to this training, our new clerk/dispatcher will be spending a day at NetCom learning some basic dispatch procedures that can assist us in our own operations.

[Hmmm..... This couldn't be the same Chameleon animal control data base system that Ed Boks, General Manager at LA Animal Services and California Healthy Pets Act coalition member, is using, could it? Must be a coincidence. I do recall reading on a few occasions by another well-researched blogger that Chameleon is Ed's software-of-choice for "cooking the books"! Not my choice of words but interesting nonetheless, eh?]

Nov 2003: Accepted a report from the General Manager. Animal Control and shelter activity has continued to increase over prior months. In addition, there has been a noticeable increase in field activity such as animal biting incidents and barking dog complaints.

[What's this? Animal biting incidents? I didn't think this was possible with spayed and neutered dogs according to Lloyd Levine and Judie Mancuso. Could this possibly mean that Santa Cruz is failing in accomplishing their goal? Santa Cruz canines nibbling on neighbors and chomping on the postman and the meter reader?]

Here is more from the Board meeting in November 2003.

The shelter has gained in traffic through the facility. The latter is reflected in the ASA's increase in revenue generated in Humane Services, which included adoptions, reclaim fees and other shelter-related activities. Staffing has consistently presented a problem in our response to the workload created by this increase in shelter visits by the public.

[It appears then that this is a "revenue generating" bill? Is that what Levine and Mancuso mean when they say "SAVE MONEY, SAVE LIVES"? Has Mr. Levine NOT read the part in the Santa Cruz Board meeting minutes that staffing has consistently been presented with problems with the ADDITIONALLY CREATED WORKLOAD caused by MSN? Isn't AB1634 the cure-all feel-good bill of the future?]

The California Healthy Pets website says communities will be SAFER. They drool on by informing that "Mandatory spaying and neutering will reduce the dangers caused by roaming stray animals, the transmission of rabies, and injuries from dog bites. Unaltered dogs are three times more likely to attack humans and other pets."

Since Santa Cruz field authorities state that there is a noticeable increase in field activities such as animal biting incidents WITH mandatory spay/neuter, it would appear that "mandatory" spaying and neutering is

DETRIMENTAL to communities and NOT SAFER!

OOPS!

Must be an oversight on the California Healthy Pets website. I do hope their new blogger is reading this!

Here is a link to the recent Santa Cruz Sentinel article "Animal Shelter Workers Protest Leader's Departure" (12 Dec 2007)

<http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/story.php?storySection=Local&sid=51502>

It appears the first paragraph explains things quite nicely. Workers suspected that Katherine Vos resigned Monday "under pressure." The article also states that "workers declined to comment to the press on Tuesday in fear of losing their positions." Some shelter workers called in sick on Tuesday to protest a decision they said was "forced on them."

Vos, the second general manager to oversee shelters in Scotts Valley and Watsonville since the county agency was formed in 2002, stated "I know there's been a lot of dissension about me leaving and this is not what I wanted." (The shelters house a combined 6,500 animals.)

The county took over animal-control services and the bulk of sheltering in 2002, amid a FINANCIAL SCANDAL at the local SPCA. The SPCA now serves as an advocacy and education group but does not handle shelters.

The Animal Services Authority is governed by a board of city and county administrators and law enforcement heads. Only one elected official, Sheriff Steve Robbins, serves on the board.

Vos has worked in animal sheltering and enforcement for more than 25 years, and is vice president of the state Animal Control Directors Association. Before coming to Santa Cruz she worked as chief animal control officer for El Dorado County and chief animal care officer for Sacramento Animal Care Services.

[Wouldn't you think Santa Cruz would want to keep the VP of the Animal Control Directors Association on their payroll?]

Continuing on setting the record straight, here is a link to an article about "Taiwanese" dogs in the State of California.

<http://www.cooldoghalloffame.com/rescue-dog-hall-of-fame/prison-program-turns-problem-dogs-into-pets/1377>

From the San Francisco Chronicle (14 Dec).

"Taiwan? There are dogs in shelters here from Taiwan? Yes, there are. In some parts of the United States there is a *shortage* of adoptable dogs, not an overpopulation. Dogs are being imported to the U.S. from Puerto Rico to as far away as Taiwan to fill shelters here so people can adopt them. It's currently easy to import dogs into the U.S. though, as diseases like the canine version of rabies are eliminated here, more people are worrying about the diseases that such dogs may bring with them into this country." [Thanks to Cool Dog Hall of Fame!]

"PRISON PROGRAM TURNS PROBLEM DOGS INTO PETS"

Last year, Melody was just another typical mongrel from Taiwan: sharp features, pointy ears, curly tail. [please click on above link for full text of article]

In closing, Santa Cruz MSN is a miserable failure. No "ifs", "ands" or "buts" about it. It failed. Plain and simple. However, Lloyd Levine and Judie Mancuso are going to continue beating a dead horse. By the way, when I asked Ms. Mancuso in October 2007 the following question, "Judie, whose bill is this? Yours? Or Lloyd's?" Her reply was swift. "Why it is MY BILL, of course! Lloyd is busy with his Senate campaign."

I had no idea that Ms. Mancuso was now an elected official. I must have missed that part. My bad.

The Santa Cruz shelter statistics that are being utilized by the coalition are unverifiable. Please note that when mandatory spay/neuter was first implemented in Santa Cruz (1995-1997), sky rockets were going off. Impounds and euthanasia went through the roof.

There is NOTHING "healthy" about AB1634. This unfunded bill will cost the State of California MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. The California Healthy Pets Act will NOT save the state ANY money. It will NOT save lives. Thousands more dogs and cats will lose their lives in shelter "death camps" needlessly throughout the state!

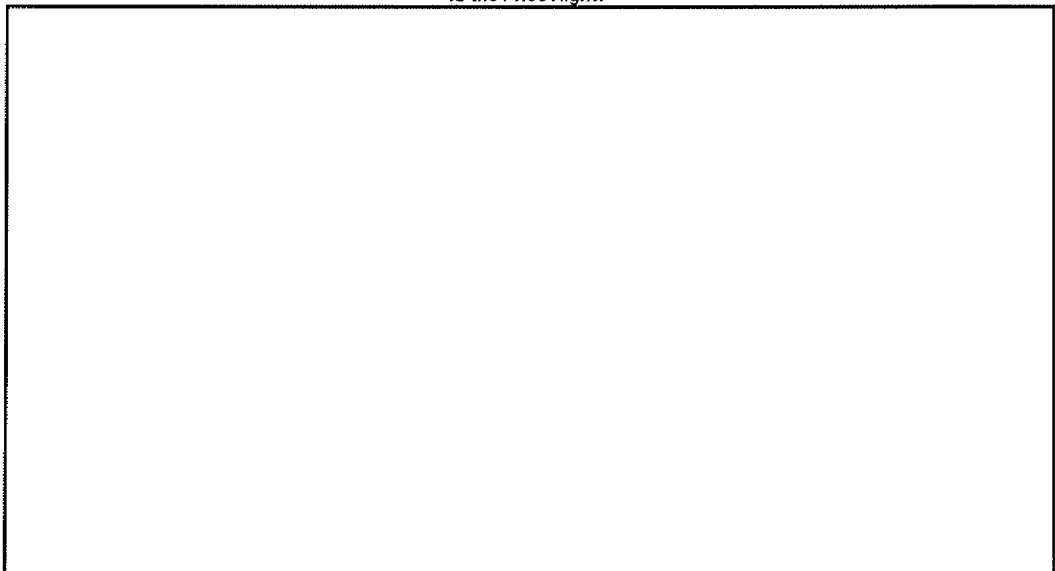
Let's kick this bill to the curb and get back to what we all love ... our companion animals. Make 2008 the year that this legislation goes to that great big doghouse in the sky.

NOW the record has been set straight!

Happy Holidays,
Brat Zinsmaster

P.S. Please feel free to share this "record" with your Assembly Members and Senators, with your local news media (print and radio), with your local shelters, the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker. Permission to cross post is encouraged!

IS the Price Right?





10373

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Mandatory Spay/Neuter Laws Hurt Animals

Mandatory spay/neuter is en vogue these days, but no-kill advocates such as Best Friends, Alley Cat Allies and the No Kill Advocacy Center point out the downside to putting false hope in these laws. In reality, mandatory spay/neuter laws just shift the focus away from the status quo at kill shelters and place blame on "irresponsible pet owners."

[Read the article from No Kill Advocacy Center](#)

[Read the article from Alley Cat Allies](#)

The most positive, proactive way to get people to spay and neuter their pets is not to criminalize them if they don't, but to educate them about why they should and help them to pay for it. Ultimately, punitive measures such as mandatory spay/neuter do more to hurt animals than to help them.

10 Reasons Why Mandatory Spay/Neuter Doesn't Work

1. Penalizing the Animals. Unaltered animals who end up in the animal control shelter are at risk of being killed if their owners cannot pay the reclaim fees for spay/neuter, fines and impoundment. This constitutes a "lien" on the animal, and if costs (which can be hundreds of dollars) are not paid, the animal becomes the property of animal control. Since Pima County animal control kills more than 60% of all animals impounded, this is a harsh consequence.

2. Faulty Logic. These laws are based on the premise that animal births are responsible for shelter killing. Decreasing the animal birth rate may (or may not) decrease shelter intake, but it will not necessarily reduce the rate of killing. That takes a commitment to all of the life-saving programs and services of the No-Kill Equation.

3. Feral Cats. Feral cats are not owned and will not be affected by the law. Rather than promoting TNR, it will legitimize the outdated approach of rounding up and killing feral cats.

4. Non-Compliance. The most egregious offenders are not likely to comply with the law, just like they are less likely to go to the vet and license their animals.

5. Lack of Funding. These laws disproportionately impact low-income pet owners and rarely include adequate funding for free and low-cost spay/neuter programs.

6. Inadequate Capacity. Even if we had adequate funding and everyone did comply, we do not have the capacity in our vet clinic system to accommodate all the animals needing surgery.

7. Exemptions. In order to gain enough public support to get such laws passed, they are often watered down with exemptions and breeding permits, which defeats the purpose.

8. Expensive and Difficult to Enforce. Most communities aren't even able to enforce the laws that are already on the books, much less mandatory spay/neuter laws that rarely include additional funding for their enforcement.

9. False Sense of Success. Many people assume that once there is a law, the job is done. This can lead to public apathy and lower participation with the programs that really will make a difference in reducing the killing.

10. Not Necessary to Achieve No-Kill. Communities that have tried mandatory spay/neuter have abandoned it after it hasn't worked. In San Mateo County, California, this type of ordinance resulted in a 126% increase in dog deaths and an 86% increase in cat deaths. In addition, licensing compliance dropped by 35%. After the mandatory spay/neuter failure, they switched to free and low-cost spay/neuter programs. The communities that have successfully implemented the No-Kill Equation have not used mandatory spay/neuter.

[Read more from the Nevada Humane Society](#)

[Read more from the San Francisco SPCA](#)

[Citizens for a No Kill Tucson](#)

MANDATORY SPAY NEUTER LAWS FAIL EVERYWHERE

Mandatory Spay Neuter laws across America have led to

- more animals killed
- more animals impounded
- increased animal control costs
- decreased licensing revenues

Santa Cruz County, California

1995 mandatory spay/neuter ordinance change in shelter intakes and euthanasia rates are no better than the state average

- Animal control costs doubled after passage
- Animal control costs "spiraling" out of control, according to a Santa Cruz Sentinel investigation
- Capitola, CA canceled animal services contract with county due to rising costs
- Watsonville threatening to pull out due to rising costs
- Licensing compliance dropped significantly

Supporters of AB 1634 frequently claim that Santa Cruz County had a 50+% reduction in shelter intakes after imposed mandatory spay/neuter in 1995. This is not true. The official shelter data published by California's Department of Health Services (CDHS), County of Santa Cruz budgets per State Controller County Budget Act, show the annual budget for 1990 \$626,522, 1993 \$642,498. In 1995, the MSN law was passed. From 1995 to 2002, the annual budget increased from \$647,742 with an average increase of \$52,454 annually, for a 2007 budget of 1,329,637. <http://www.naiaonline.org/pdfs/SC budget.pdf>

Los Angeles, California

In 2000, after passing the mandatory Spay or Pay ordinance, the LA County saw:

- A decline in licensing compliance.
- Animal control budget rose 269%, from \$6.7 million to \$18 million.
- City hired additional animal control officers and bought new trucks and equipment just to enforce the new law

Montgomery County, Maryland

- Mandatory spay/neuter law was passed but later repealed as a failure
- 50% decline in licensing compliance while ordinance in effect
- Euthanasia rates declined more slowly than before the ordinance passed

Fort Worth, Texas

- Ended its mandatory spay/neuter program
- licensing compliance fell off after passage of the ordinance
- There was a reduction in rabies vaccinations which lead to an increase in rabies in the city

King County, Washington

1992 mandatory spay/neuter ordinance

- License compliance decreases since passage of the ordinance
- Animal control expenses increased 56.8% and revenues only 43.2%
- In 1990 animal controls were \$1,662,776. By 1997 animal control costs were \$3,087,350
- Euthanasia rates fell at a slower rate after passage of the ordinance

King County, WA is commonly held up by supporters as an example of MSN success. These two articles by Nathan Winograd (www.BestFriends.org) illustrate how MSN supporters spin data: <http://nathanwinograd.blogspot.com/2007/09/truth-about-king-county.html>

Aurora, Colorado

- mandatory spay/neuter ordinance
- licensing compliance has dropped dramatically.

Pinellas County, Florida

- breeder licensing since 1992
- animal control budget increased 75% with revenue increasing only 13%.
- shelter intake and euthanasia rates increased after the law took effect

San Mateo County, California

The nation's first mandatory spay/neuter law was in San Mateo County, CA. In 1991, dog deaths in the areas governed by the MSN ordinance increased 126% and cats 86%, while areas of the county not covered by MSN laws decreased. Licenses declined by 35%. It was primarily pushed by the Peninsula Humane Society (PHS). The PHS assessed the San Mateo MSN law to have been "disappointing" since it led to increases in shelter killing. As a result, the PHS does not support CA AB 1634. Supporters of AB 1634 do not use San Mateo statistics, as it is so widely recognized as a failure.

Camden County, New Jersey

1996 mandatory spay/neuter ordinance: PAWS NJ comments 5 years later, 'An analysis of these statistics shows the Humane Society of Southern NJ which operates the Camden County Animal Shelter, to be consistently one of the leading, if not the leading killers of animals in the state of New Jersey.'

OPPOSE HB 2516


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Position Statement on Mandatory Spay/Neuter Laws

Background

Nationwide, per capita shelter intake and euthanasia have seen a steady decline for the past several decades and research indicates that the main reason for this decline is the increasing incidence of spayed and neutered animals in the pet population (Zawistowski et al., 1998; Jones, 2001; Clancy & Powers, 2003). In fact, the veterinary community recently formally acknowledged the importance of safe, efficient, accessible sterilization programs as the "last avenue to the mass euthanasia of cats and dogs resulting from overpopulation" (Looney et al., 2006). There is, however, variation in the trend in shelter intake and euthanasia decline across communities as well as a difference between that for dogs and cats. As a result, many communities are currently searching for methods to reach the segments of the animal owning population that are still contributing disproportionately to companion animal overpopulation. Attempts to reduce shelter intake and euthanasia through the passage of legislation mandating the spaying and neutering of companion animals has recently garnered much attention and debate.

To the knowledge of the ASPCA, the only method of population control that has demonstrated long-term efficacy in significantly reducing the number of animals entering animal shelters is the voluntary sterilization of owned pets (Clancy & Rowen 2003; FIPSPAW, 2004; Sawich, 2003). There is also evidence that sterilizing very specific, at risk, sub-populations of companion animals such as feral cats and animals in shelters can also contribute to reductions in overpopulation (Zawistowski et al., 1998; Clancy & Powers 2003; Levy et al., 2003; Long et al., 1996; Nardi et al., 2006). In contrast, the ASPCA is not aware of any credible evidence demonstrating a statistically significant enhancement in the reduction of shelter intake or euthanasia as a result of the implementation of a mandatory spay/neuter law.

Careful must therefore be applied when interpreting existing claims regarding the effects of local mandatory spay/neuter (MSN) laws. First, because nationwide per capita shelter intake and euthanasia generally are in decline due to voluntary spaying and neutering, it is impossible to determine the effect of an MSN law without comparing a community's trends in shelter intake and euthanasia for several years before and after the law was enacted to trends in adjacent, similar communities without MSN legislation. Furthermore, to discern with confidence the effects of any spay/neuter program on the animal population, which naturally fluctuates somewhat from year to year, population trends must be examined over a period sufficiently long to absorb more natural fluctuations; claims based on one or two years of data can be misleading.

In addition, it is impossible to generalize about the effects of MSN laws. One reason is that the definition of "mandatory" varies greatly across communities. In some locations, a citation may be issued for any animal over the age of 6 months seen unaltered, while in other communities a citation results only when another animal control offense has been committed or if over three non-sterilized female animal lives in the household. Another complication is that it can be extremely difficult for even a veterinary professional to visually determine if an animal, particularly a female, has been sterilized; it would be visually impossible for an animal control officer to make those determinations in the field. For these reasons, and due to variation across communities in law enforcement funding and personnel support, actual enforcement of MSN laws varies widely, making comparisons between MSN laws or prohibitions about their impact very difficult.

Another reason for caution when interpreting the effects of MSN legislation is that shelter intake and euthanasia statistics are often presented as a total of dogs and cats. In some communities, the number of dogs entering and being euthanized in shelters is dropping significantly while the number of cats is declining more slowly or even increasing. Therefore it is critical to examine population and shelter statistics for dogs and cats separately, so that reductions in dog intake and euthanasia do not mask increases in cat intake and euthanasia. This issue is particularly crucial in the analysis of the effect of MSN laws, since feral and unowned stray cats continue to represent a substantial proportion of the shelter population and euthanasia. This major contributing factor is not addressed by MSN laws that, by nature, target owned animals.

Even when an MSN law seems to have a positive effect on one aspect of animal welfare, it may have a negative effect on another. For instance, in at least one community that enacted an MSN law, fewer pets were subsequently licensed, likely due to owners' reluctance to pay either the high fee for licensing an unaltered animal or the fee to have the pet altered (Office of Legislative Oversight, 1997).

The ASPCA is also concerned that some communities may rely primarily or exclusively on MSN legislation to reduce shelter intake and euthanasia even though the animal shelter population



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against animal cruelty.

Most say, an
easy pet to
take with an
expensive story.

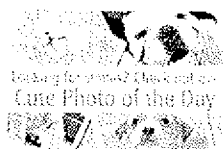


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is actually very heterogeneous, with no single cause or source (National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy, 2003). Many social, cultural and economic factors as well as animal health and behavioral issues contribute to shelter intake; therefore no single program or law can be relied on to solve the problem.

Furthermore, one of the main barriers to spaying and neutering of pets is accessibility of services, which is not addressed simply by making spaying and neutering mandatory. Cost is one of the primary barriers to spay/neuter surgery in many communities (Peterson et al., 1997; Nelson-Pearce, 2000; Frank, 2003). In fact, low household income and poverty are statistically associated with having a sexually intact cat (Hartnack, et al, 1997), with relinquishment of pets to shelters (Peterson et al., 1996), and with shelter intake (Frank, 2003). As a result, the proportion of pets from poor communities that are being euthanized or sheltered remains high; shelter euthanasia rates in the poorest counties in states including California can now 10-year are several times higher than those in the most affluent counties (Frank, 2003; Hartnack, 2006). Each community is unique, however, in terms of the particular sources and causes of companion animal overpopulation and the primary barriers that exist to having any effect. No one-size-fits-all solution is therefore provided. In numerous communities around the country that are having significant success in reducing companion animal overpopulation, it appears that the common denominator is a multifaceted, targeted community program that:

- Is based on careful research to determine which segments of the animal population are actually significantly contributing to shelter intake and euthanasia, and then targets efforts to those segments of the population;
- Focuses on the particular barriers to spay/neuter that are predominant and strives to overcome them;
- Is well-supported and well-funded; and
- Has an efficient voluntary spay/neuter infrastructure in place to serve the population it targets.

ASPCA Position

Based on currently available scientific information, the ASPCA strongly supports spay/neuter as an effective means to reduce companion animal overpopulation. In particular, the ASPCA supports voluntary, affordable spay/neuter programs for owned pets. Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs for feral cats and the mandatory sterilization of shelter animals and of certain municipal-owned animals based on their or their owners' behavior (such as animals deemed dangerous under local ordinances or those repeatedly caught at-large). In order to assure the efficacy of any spay/neuter program designed to reduce shelter intake and euthanasia, the ASPCA believes that each community must conduct credible research into the specific causes of relinquishment and abandonment and the sources of animals in its shelters, including the barriers to spay/neuter services that are faced by those populations contributing disproportionately to the problem. Each community must address these issues with a tailored, multifaceted approach as described below:

- The community should have in place an adequately funded, readily accessible, safe, efficient, affordable spay/neuter program.
- Community research should identify the particular segments of the population that are contributing disproportionately to shelter intake and euthanasia, and the community should produce programs that are targeted to those populations.
- The community should strive to maximize the accessibility of spay/neuter services and provide compelling incentives to have the surgery performed.
- The spay/neuter program should be developed with the guidance of veterinary professionals who are committed to delivering high quality spay/neuter services to all patients (Cohen et al., 2008).
- The program must adequately address the contribution that surrendered stray animals make to overpopulation.
- The program must be adequately supported in terms of training, staffing, and infrastructure.
- The efficacy of all aspects of the program must be monitored and revisions made as necessary to achieve its goals.

In summary, the ASPCA recognizes that sterilization is currently the best method to reduce companion animal overpopulation, and therefore to reduce shelter intake and euthanasia. The most important step a humane community can take to decrease companion animal overpopulation is to make a safe, effective, voluntary spay/neuter program available and readily accessible to the community, with programs and incentives targeted to the populations known to be contributing disproportionately to shelter intake and euthanasia.

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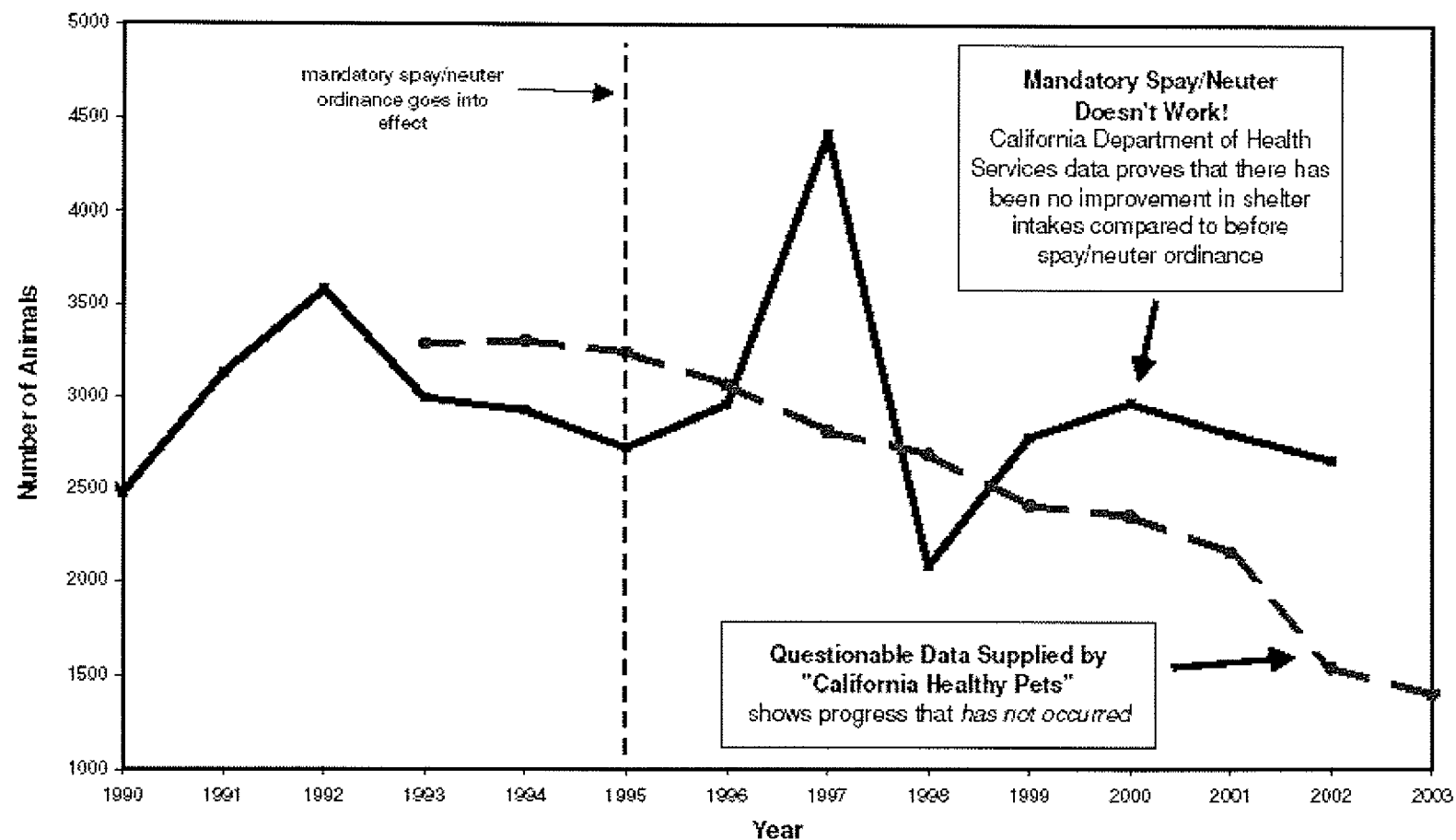
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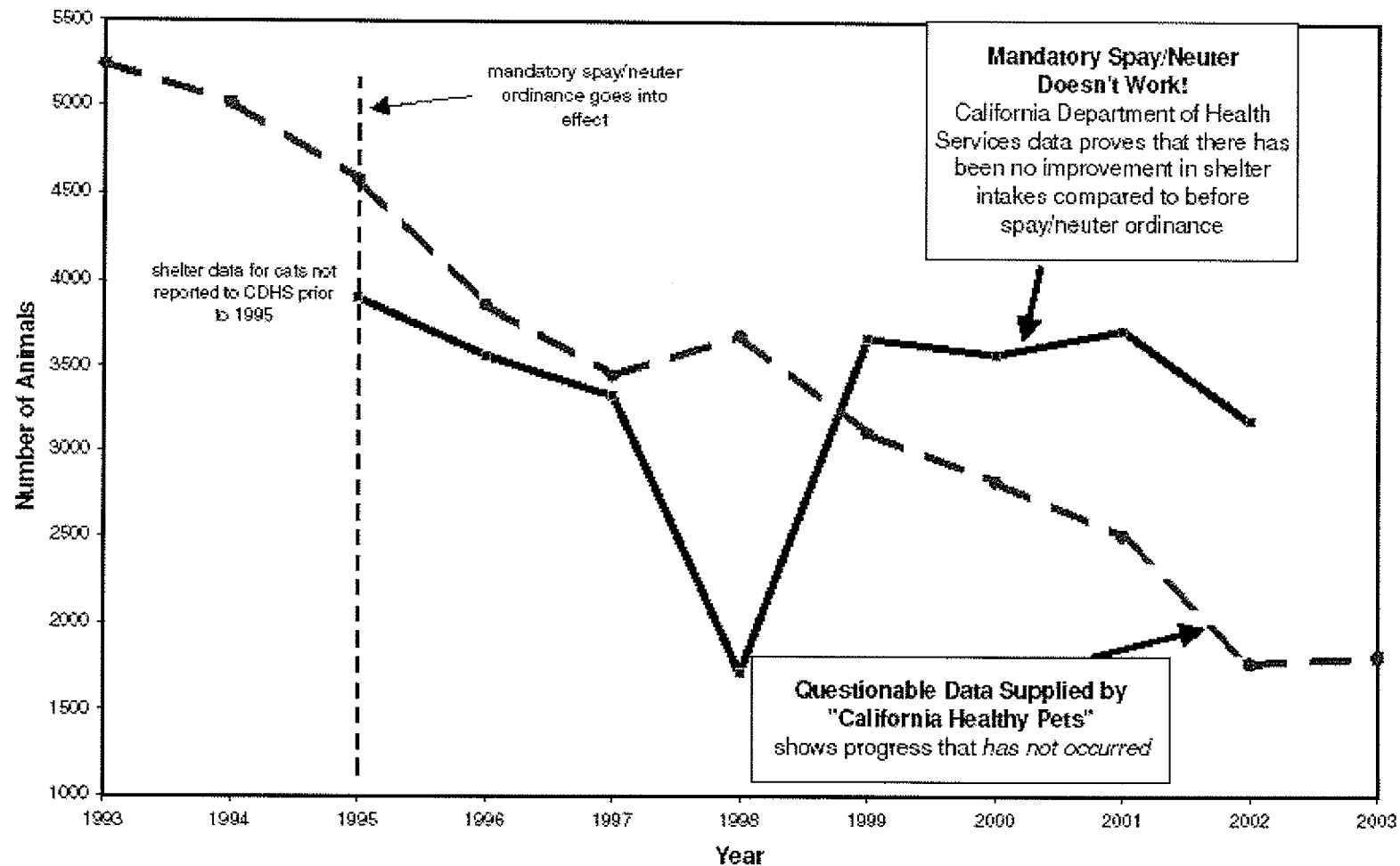
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Santa Cruz County Shelter Intakes of Dogs **Discrepancy Between California Department of Health Services Data and Claims by "California Healthy Pets" Coalition**



Sources:
 California Department of Health Services, Veterinary Public Health Section
 "California Healthy Pets" data from <http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a40/CA-HealthyPetAct/SantaCruzStats.pdf>

Santa Cruz County Shelter Intakes of Cats
Discrepancy Between California Department of Health Services Data and Claims by
"California Healthy Pets" Coalition



Sources:

California Department of Health Services, Veterinary Public Health Section

"California Healthy Pets" data from <http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/640/CA-HealthyPetAct/SantaCruzStats.pdf>

Dog and Cat Impounds in Santa Cruz County

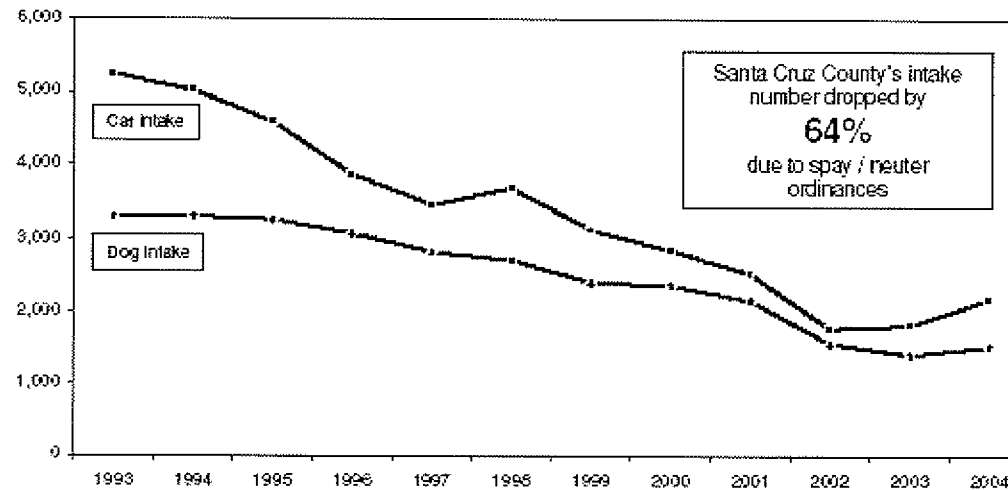
January 29, 2007



CALIFORNIA HEALTHY PETS ACT
www.cahelpet.com
judie@cahelpet.com

In the mid 1990's the County of Santa Cruz implemented a mandatory spay and neuter ordinance in effort to reduce the high number of animals its shelters took in each year.

Santa Cruz County – Animal Shelter Intake



	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Dogs entering Santa Cruz shelters	3,293	3,302	3,247	3,070	2,817	2,693	2,415	2,352	2,162	1,546	1,403	1,503
Percent of dogs entering shelter euthanized	36%	36%	28%	27%	20%	20%	18%	19%	16%	14%	16%	17%
Dogs euthanized per 1,000 residents	4.9	4.9	4.4	4.0	2.7	2.5	2.0	2.1	1.9	1.0	1.0	1.2
Cats entering Santa Cruz shelters	5,245	5,016	4,578	3,861	3,451	3,682	3,113	2,830	2,511	1,759	1,905	2,165
Percent of cats entering shelter euthanized	62%	60%	59%	52%	48%	41%	37%	36%	37%	31%	45%	42%
Cats euthanized per 1,000 residents	16.3	14.8	13.2	9.8	8.0	7.8	5.5	4.8	4.4	2.5	3.8	4.9

Note: Service for the City of Watsonville (pop 50,000) was established late in 2004. During the entire service period, the City of Capitola (pop 10,000) had not adopted the provisions of the County SAN ordinance. Total service area population from 1993 to 2004 grew from 209,856 to 211,000 people.

The Impound data labeled Dogs entering Santa Cruz Shelters and Cats Entering Santa Cruz Shelters and corresponding graph contains questionable data. It does not match Santa Cruz County Impound data reported, by law, to the CDHS-VPHS.

California Healthy Pets Act - AB 1634

Proponents data raises authenticity questions

By Angie Niles

From the moment the California Healthy Pets Act was introduced, animal shelter data and shelter population trends became critically important topics. As a trained mathematician, I am inherently interested in numbers but these data sets are all the more intriguing because the advocates and opponents of AB 1634 interpret the data to support opposite conclusions.

Proponents claim that reduction in shelter animal impound and euthanasia rates can be achieved only by mandatory spay/neuter laws and point to shelter data from Santa Cruz County where such a law was passed to prove their case. Opponents point to an already existing trend of dramatic reductions in shelter euthanasias as proof that mandatory spay/neuter programs are unnecessary.

As a result, I have been analyzing shelter intakes and euthanasia rates from California counties for the last several weeks to determine what is actually going on.

During the course of this study, which will be reported on in further detail in an update to this report, it became clear that the dog and cat impound data used by supporters to promote this bill **do not match** Santa Cruz County shelter data reported, by law, to the California Department of Health Services - Veterinary Public Health Section. Please see the following graphs showing the discrepancies between the Santa Cruz County impound data for dogs and cats as reported to the CDHS-VPHS and the data used by supporters of AB 1634. The curves do not match. This author searched exhaustively for other data sources in an attempt to understand where CA Healthy Pets Act advocates obtained their data: no other data sources that are known to this author matched.

It is difficult to reconcile the severity and pattern of the deviation between the CA Healthy Pets Act data from that of the only credible data source available, CDHS-VPHS. My conclusion, in the absence of any clarifying information is that data used by CA Healthy Pets Act advocates is falsified. The CA Healthy Pet Act data is consistently offset in such a way as to indicate a downward trend where none exists. There are additional inconsistencies in the CA Healthy Pets Act dog and cat impounds in Santa Cruz County chart that are troubling to anyone who knows what to look for and who has done their due diligence. The original AB 1634 CA Healthy Pets Act chart and graph containing what appears to be falsified data and other questionable claims can be found at this website.

The results of this study indicate that the fundamental premise of this bill claiming a nexus between pet birth rates and shelter euthanasia rates and its corollary that lowered birth rates via mandatory spay/neuter will result in lowered euthanasia rates is not supported by the facts.

AB 1634 is singular in its approach. It does not address any of the top nine reasons that people relinquish pets to shelters in the first place. Therefore it cannot lower shelter impound rates and, subsequently, euthanasia rates through behavior modification or assistance programs that affect these top causes. The intent of AB 1634 is to force reduction of shelter euthanasia rates by reducing the supply of pets available irrespective of demand until no animals are relinquished to shelters. Using that approach, AB 1634 would have to be applied nationally - if not internationally - in order to quench supply. Since AB 1634 is only statewide, it diminishes neither the supply of nor the demand for dogs and cats in absolute terms, although it is likely to reduce the supply of California-bred pets. It merely shifts the suppliers to underground operations and/or out of state sources. ***Under AB 1634, shelter euthanasia rates can only drop to zero when the absolute numbers of dogs and cats drops to zero.***

It is my studied opinion that because AB 1634 fails to address the true causes of shelter relinquishment that lead to euthanasia, no amendments can fix this bill. Additionally, society will become encumbered with the unintended consequences of AB 1634 while never achieving the stated goal.

Note: Data used for this study was obtained from the California Department of Health Services – Veterinary Public Health Section, The National Animal Interest Alliance Shelter Project and the Animal Council.

Subj: **Las Vegas to Consider Mandatory Spay/Neuter Ordinance**
Date: 10/26/2009 12:13:04 P.M. Pacific Standard Time
From: mba@akc.org
To: kiichoakitas@aol.com

Dear AKC Delegates, Club Officers, Judges and Breeders,

Please forward the information below to your club members in the Las Vegas area. Thank you for your assistance with this important issue.

The committee designated by the Las Vegas City Council to review a proposed mandatory spay/neuter ordinance will hold its first meeting on November 3rd. It is vital that concerned fanciers and responsible dog owners and breeders become involved with these proceedings. The proposed ordinance is burdensome, overly restrictive and will significantly increase burdens on responsible owners and breeders.

Las Vegas City Council Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 3rd

9am

City Council Chambers

400 Stewart Avenue

Las Vegas, NV 89101

City Council Members on the Committee: Stavros S. Anthony & Ricki Y. Barlow

Provisions of the Ordinance

- All dogs and cats over the age of 4 months must be spayed or neutered unless the owner qualifies for one of the following exemptions:
 - holds a valid dog fancier, cat fancier permit, breeder permit or professional animal handler permit
 - the dog is used by a law enforcement agency as a law enforcement dog
 - the dog is used by a search and rescue agency for search and rescue activities
 - Please note that many search and rescue dogs are privately owned and would not be exempt under the current proposal
 - The dog is a service animal such as a guide animal, hearing animal, assistance animal, seizure alert animal or social/therapy animal
 - The dog is being used by a pound, shelter, humane society or similar organization, whether public or private, the principal purpose of which is securing the adoption of dogs or cats, provided that such organization has a policy and rules requiring the spaying or neutering of all dogs and cats placed for adoption
- All puppies or kittens born to dogs and cats that have not been spayed/neutered as required will be forfeited and may be given to the local shelter for adoption
 - This is a particularly puzzling provision if the goal is to reduce the number of animals in the shelter. Why would the city confiscate puppies and kittens who would likely find good homes without their interference? A fine would be understandable, but confiscation is unreasonable.
- Fines for violation
 - \$250 for a first offense
 - \$500 for a second offense
 - \$1000 for a third offense
 - These fines are outrageously high and will likely force some owners to surrender their pets
 - The fine is reduced by 80% if the animal is sterilized within 30 days, however as these surgeries themselves cost hundreds of dollars, that does not help individuals who cannot afford the fines
- Impounded dogs or cats that are intact, but whose owners do not qualify for one of the above exemptions must be sterilized prior to release
 - The current wording of this section seems to mandate that animal control perform the sterilization, and would deny owners the ability to take the animal to a veterinarian of their own choosing
- Provides that impounded animals be kept for only 72 hours
 - Three days is a short time frame, especially as it is not specified that these are business days. A family on vacation for a long weekend may return home to find their pet has been impounded and adopted out to someone else
- Requires that impounded animals be microchipped and that the owner pay for the microchipping prior to

Monday, October 26, 2009 AOL: KiichoAkitas

release

- This only adds to the fees owners are required to pay for reclaiming their animal
- No fee for this service is specified
- The ordinance does not require the microchip be enrolled with a national registry. The implantation of the chip does not help recover the animal, only enrollment with a national registry will provide the owner's contact information
- Pet Stores are required to provide the following information to Department of Detention and Enforcement
 - The name and residence address of the buyer
 - The address of the location where the dog or cat will reside, if not the same as the buyer's address
 - The breed and approximate age
 - A description, including principal colors
 - Failure to provide this information shall be grounds for non-renewal of, or disciplinary action against, a business license
 - It is unreasonable to require a business to violate their customer's privacy in this manner
 - Since many shoppers may not reside within the city, it will create burdensome paperwork that in many cases will be useless
 - May cause shoppers to choose pet stores that are not within the Las Vegas City limits, costing those stores business
 - Will increase costs for stores when they have to sterilize any animals that may be over 4 months of age
 - May in fact deter these stores from selling older animals

The Silver State Kennel Club is working with the city council to address their concerns with the ordinance. Legislative Liaison Ken Sondej who can be reached at 4winds@viawest.net is coordinating speakers for the committee meeting. You can also contact the AKC Government Relations Department at doglaw@akc.org for additional information. Thank you your attention to this important issue.

AKC Government Relations
8051 Arco Corporate Drive, Suite 100
Raleigh, NC 27617
919-816-3720

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The American Kennel Club, 8051 Arco Corporate Dr. Suite 100, Raleigh, NC 27617 United States

Ovaries & Longevity

exploring sex differences in

A Healthier Respect for Ovaries

David J. Waters, DVM, PhD, Diplomate ACVS

A recent study by my research group appearing next month in *Aging Cell* reveals short longevity as a possible complication associated with ovary removal in dogs (1). This work represents the first investigation testing the strength of association between lifetime dog ovary exposure and exceptional longevity in mammals. To accomplish this, we constructed lifetime medical histories for two cohorts of Rottweiler dogs living in 29 states and Canada. The Exceptional Longevity Cohort = a group of exceptionally long-lived dogs that lived at least 16 years; and Usual Longevity Cohort = a comparison group of dogs that lived 8.0 to 10.4 years (average age at death for Rottweilers is 9.4 years). A female survival advantage in human life is well-documented; women are 4 times more likely than men to live to 100. We found that in women, female Rottweilers were more likely than males to achieve exceptional longevity (Odds Ratio, 95% confidence interval = 2.0, 1.2 - 3.3; $p = .006$). However, *removal of ovaries in the first 4 years of life erased the female survival advantage*. In females, this strong positive association between ovaries and longevity persisted in multivariate analysis that considered other factors, such as height, adult body weight, and mother with exceptional longevity.

In summary, we found female Rottweilers who kept their ovaries for at least 6 years were 2 times more likely to reach exceptional longevity (i.e. live >30 % longer than average) than females with the shortest ovary exposure. Our results support the notion that how long a dog keeps their ovaries determines how long they live.

In the pages that follow, I have attempted to frame these new findings in a way that will encourage veterinarians to venture beyond the peer-reviewed scientific text and data-tables of *Aging Cell* to consider the pragmatic, yet sometimes emotionally charged implications of this work. Call it a primer for the dynamic discussions that will undoubtedly take place only between practitioners and pet owners, but also within the veterinary profession. Call it a wake-up call for how little veterinarians have been schooled in the mechanistic nuts and bolts underlying the aging process. Call it an ovary story.

Do ovaries really promote longevity? Observed associations between exposures and outcomes may not necessarily be causal, so we explored alternative, non-causal explanations for the association between ovaries and exceptional longevity in our study. But we found no evidence that factors which may influence a pet owner's decision on age at ovary removal — for example, earlier ovariectomy in dogs with substandard conformation or delayed ovariectomy to produce more offspring in daughters of long-lived mothers — could adequately account for the association.

There is another aspect of our data pattern that gives us further confidence that ovaries do matter when it comes to successful aging. A simple explanation for the observation ovaries promote longevity would be that taking away ovaries increases the risk for a non-lethal disease. In Rottweilers, cancer is the major killer. We found, however, that by conducting a subgroup analysis that excluded all dogs that died of cancer, the strong association between intact ovaries and exceptional longevity persisted. After excluding all cancer deaths, females that kept their ovaries the longest were 9 times more likely to reach exceptional longevity than females with shortest ovary exposure. *Thus, we observed a robust ovarian association with longevity that was independent of cause of death, suggesting that a network of processes regulating the intrinsic rate of aging is under ovarian control.* This work positions pet dogs, across their broad range of lifetime ovary exposure, to become biogerontology's new window for identifying ovary-sensitive physiological processes that promote healthy longevity.

Interestingly, our findings in dogs surface just as data from women are calling into question whether those who undergo hysterectomy should have ovary removal or ovary sparing. Our results mirror the findings from more than 29,000 women in the Nurses' Health Study who underwent hysterectomy for benign uterine disease (2). In that study, the upside of ovariectomy — protection against ovarian, uterine, and breast cancer — was outweighed by increased mortality from other causes. As a result, longevity was cut short in women who had their ovaries removed before the age of 50 compared with those who kept their ovaries for at least 10 years. Taken together, the emerging message for dogs and women seems to be that when it comes to longevity, it pays to keep your ovaries.

But before we all go out and buy T-shirts with some romantic imperative like "Save the Ovaries", perhaps we should step back and consider the following question: Why have previous dog studies called our attention to this potential downside of ovariectomy? Reading the literature, an answer quickly bubbles up. No previous studies in pet dogs have rigorously evaluated the association between ovaries and longevity. Two frequently cited reports provide limited guidance because: (1) longevity data are presented as combined mean age at death for a relatively small number of individuals of more than 50 breeds of different breeds and life expectancy; and (2) ovarian status is reported as "intact" or "spayed", rather than as number of years of lifetime ovary exposure. Comparing female dogs binned into the categories of "intact" versus "spayed" introduces a methodological bias that might lead one to conclude that ovaries adversely influence longevity, i.e. ovary removal promotes longevity. Because reasons for ovariectomy (e.g., uterine infection, mammary cancer) increase with increasing age, it is expected that a large percentage of the oldest-dogs are binned as "spayed" despite many years of ovary exposure. For example, a dog who at age 12 undergoes ovariohysterectomy for pyometra would be binned as "spayed", despite 12 years of ovary exposure. In our study, we employed a more stringent study design — restricting the study population to AKC registered, pure-bred dogs of one breed, carefully quantitating the duration of ovarian exposure — in order to lessen the likelihood of such bias. And we realized that studying veterinary teaching hospital-based populations of dogs with artifactually low life expectancies (for example, 3.5 years is median age at death for Rottweilers in the Vet Medical Data Base)(5) was an inappropriate vehicle to describe the influence that ovaries have on aging. So we cast a wider net and collected data from Rottweiler owners nationwide, focusing our attention on exceptional longevity, not average age at death, as our study endpoint.

Why study exceptional longevity? Why not average longevity? We thought studying the

exceptionally long-lived individuals would tell us something about what it takes to age successfully. It's the same rationale used by Thomas Perls and investigators of the New Centenarian Study (6) and by other scientists who study long-lived humans in other parts of the world (7). The approach even garners support from the mathematical field. In a seminar on the origins of creative genius, the mathematician Jacques Hadamard wrote: "In contrast with a rule which seems applicable to every science of observation, it is the exceptional phenomenon which is likely to explain the usual one." (8) Hadamard was trying to understand how the brain gets creative so he studied people with extreme creativity. When it comes to studying aging, we're solidly in the Hadamard camp. That is why in 2005 we established the Exceptional Longevity Data Base, launching the first systematic study of the oldest-old (9). But folks in the opposing camp might justifiably fire back: "Don't study extreme longevity. Extreme longevity is much more about luck than it is about genes, or environment, or

So to address the possibility that the "strangeness" or outlier nature of dogs with exceptional longevity could be forging a misleading link between ovaries and longevity, we studied a separate cohort of Rottweiler dogs. This data set was comprised of 237 female Rottweilers in North America that died at ages 1.2 to 12.9 years — none were exceptionally long-lived. Information on medical history, age at death, and cause of death was collected by questionnaire and telephone interviews with pet owners and local veterinary practitioners. In this population, we found females that kept their ovaries for at least 4.5 years had a statistically significant reduction in mortality rate (1). This translated into a median survival of 10.4 years for females with more than 4.5 years of ovary exposure — 1.4 years longer than the median survival of 9.0 years in females with shorter ovary exposure ($p < 0.0001$). *Taken together, if you remove ovaries before 4 years of age you cut longevity short an average of 1.4 years and decrease the likelihood of reaching exceptional longevity by 3-fold.*

Up to this point, my ovary story has centered around a summarizing of methodologies and results. The reader has been given opportunity to see the gist of our findings within the context of previous dog studies and late-breaking studies in women. Now, let us pivot our attention away from the results to focus on the recipients of these results — DVMs and pet owners.

We can start by tackling the question: Just how receptive will DVMs be to these new research findings? It's hard for old dogs to learn new tricks. But one thing is sure — blossoming occurs only when rooted in real communication. The anthropologist Gregory Bateson wrote: "The pre-installed state of the recipient of every message is a necessary condition for all communication. A message can tell you nothing unless you know 9/10ths of it already." (10). I call this "Bateson's the 9/10ths". If Bateson is right, then we will want to do something about the pre-installed state of veterinarians. Because when it comes to the biology of aging, the state is virtually a blank slate. None of us received training in the biology of aging as part of our DVM curriculum, whether we graduated 30 years ago or last summer. Therefore, most DVMs are ill-prepared to receive messages examining the mechanistic underpinnings of the aging process. A better prescription for positive change would be to ratchet up the biology of aging IQ of practicing veterinarians. We agree. That is why we established the first gerontology training program for veterinarians in 2007 (11). We believe that by helping veterinarians "know" more about aging, they will be more able and more receptive to communicating the things that promote longevity in their patients — things like preserving ovaries.

For certain, DVMs will be asked by pet owners to help them make their decision about spay in light of this new information. The question will be asked: Just how generalizable

these findings in Rottweilers to other segments of the pet dog population? It is impossible at this time. It will demand further study. Alas, 10 years from now, we might just find longevity-promoting effect of ovaries in dogs is limited — limited to large breeds, urban dogs, or only those individuals with particular polymorphisms in insulin-like growth factor 1. These restrictions should not only be expected, they should be celebrated. It will mean we have looked more deeply into how ovaries might influence healthy longevity. It will mean that our initial findings have been contextualized. And it is this contextualization of information that marks scientific progress — the kind of progress that guides sound clinical decision-making. For it is context that determines meaning (12).

Our provocative findings in *Aging Cell* mean that it's time to re-think the notion that ovaries have no significant downside to a dog's healthy longevity. Perhaps it would help to think of lifetime ovary exposure as information — information that instructs the organism. Just how long and how healthy a female lives reflects what her cells, tissues, and organs thought they heard from the message received. Of course in biology, there is no single message but a symphony of messages, enabling each individual to successfully respond to environmental challenges. Our findings suggest that ovaries orchestrate that symphony. Taking away early or mid-life ovaries makes for muddled information, less than perfect music.

Information muddling can ensnare decision-making. Our research takes an important first step toward disentangling the thinking about ovaries and longevity. We must never be paralyzed by the incompleteness of our knowledge. Our knowledge will always be incomplete — subject to revision, primed for further inquiry. This uncertainty, although invigorating for the investigator, is often painful for the practitioner who seeks simple, fact-driven algorithms to guide her. Just as scientists will be called upon to forge ahead with their scientific inquiries, so too will practitioners be counted on to master the uncertainty. Together, we must navigate what the Danish philosopher-theologian Søren Kierkegaard called the gap "between the understanding and the willing." That is, we must ask the right questions and make smart choices so that our action (the willing) is in synch with our knowledge (the understanding). Under just what circumstances will a particular individual benefit from specific lifestyle decisions? This is the most prescient, overarching question in the wellness and preventive medicine field both human and veterinary health professionals today. How can we promote healthy longevity? Antioxidant supplementation or calorie restriction? Ovary removal or ovary sparing?

Undoubtedly, there will be protagonists and antagonists in this ovary story. The protagonists will be open-minded to following a new script. They will embrace the idea of ovary sparing during critical periods of time to maximize longevity. They might even recognize the need for something of "ovarian mimetic" in spayed dogs to optimize healthy aging. The antagonists in this story — the defenders of the old script — will dismiss as trivial the notion that ovaries regulate the process of aging and influence healthy longevity. Lines will be drawn and opinions will fly. But *what healthy debate is* — antagonists and protagonists keeping a high priority issue front and center, not allowing it to fade into the woodwork. It would seem that, in light of the new scientific findings, a contemporary dialogue should balance the potential benefits of elective ovary removal (13) with its possible detrimental effects on longevity.

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