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Fine Approved For Failing To Spay, Neuter Pets

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- Disabled advocates and dozens of dog lovers flocked to the capitol Tuesday to showcase their animals and their opposition to a measure that would slap a \$500 fine on pet owners who fail to spay or neuter their dog or cat.

Supporters said the measure, known as the California Healthy Pets Act, is the best way to protect unwanted animals from being euthanized, NBC11's Mike Luery reported.

Sue Davidian has had 10 back surgeries and never goes anywhere without her service dog Lantis.

"I have trouble bending down and picking things up, lifting things," Davidian said. "This guy has just been an extension of me. He does the things that I can't do."

"We have nearly a million dogs and cats each year ending up in our shelters. Over 500,000 of those are euthanized," said Van Nuys Assemblyman Lloyd Levine (D.).

That costs California taxpayers an estimated \$250 million a year, Luery reported.

The measure passed seven to two, with Democrats voting in favor and Republicans opposed.

While people who breed service dogs have been specifically exempted from the legislation, people in the disabled community remain concerned about the future supply of these canine companions, Luery reported.

"There used to be a long waiting list to get dogs for disabled people and now there will be an even longer wait," said measure opponent, Jay Byrn.

Supporters of the bill said disabled pet owners have nothing to worry about.

"The last thing we want to do is get in the way of guide dogs or service dogs or police dogs, any of those," said Campaign Director For California Healthy Pets Act Judie Mancuso.

A hearing is scheduled for May in the Assembly Appropriations Committee to determine the measure's potential fiscal impact.

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