



The Web Site of The Sacramento Bee

This story is taken from [Sacbee](#) / [Politics](#).

Pet neutering bill clears committee

By Jim Sanders - Bee Capitol Bureau

Published 11:23 am PDT Tuesday, April 24, 2007

Legislation to require sterilization of nearly every dog and cat statewide in hopes of reducing the burden on animal shelters cleared its first legislative hurdle Tuesday.

The measure, Assembly Bill 1634, is meant to curb the impact of irresponsible animal owners by making fewer dogs and cats capable of reproducing.

The Assembly Business and Professions Committee passed AB 1634 on a party-line vote, 7-2, with Republicans opposed.

Public testimony on the bill, taken two weeks ago, attracted hundreds of animal enthusiasts on both sides of the issue.

Tuesday's session was limited to a statement by the author, Assemblyman Lloyd Levine, D-Van Nuys, and to questions or comments by committee members.

Levine said a statewide spay and neutering standard is needed because cities and counties have limited control over feral or unwanted pets.

"Dogs and cats don't know where one city ends and the other begins," he said.

Levine contends AB 1634 would crack down on irresponsible breeding that leads to about a million unwanted pets being born each year, costing shelters an estimated \$250 million.

Levine's bill would require that dogs and cats to be spayed or neutered by four months old. Violators could be subject to a \$500 fine.

Exceptions are provided for service animals - such as police, guide or signal dogs - and for animals excused by a letter from a veterinarian because of illness, age or poor health.

The bill faces massive opposition, with critics claiming it would interfere with the rights of pet owners, pose a financial hardship on hobbyist breeders, be ignored by the worst offenders, and be largely unenforceable.

Opponents note that animal shelter populations have fallen during the past 10 years, and that AB 1634 could backfire because some pet owners would abandon their animals rather than pay to sterilize them.

After Tuesday's committee vote, critics claimed the bill's exemption for service dogs does not

go far enough to ensure that an adequate supply of puppies will enter such programs in years to come.

Assemblywoman Shirley Horton, a San Diego Republican who voted against AB 1634, said she does not think the Legislature should mandate spaying and neutering.

"I really do think this is a local issue," she said.

Go to: [Sacbee](#) / [Back to story](#)

This article is protected by copyright and should not be printed or distributed for anything except personal use.
The Sacramento Bee, 2100 Q St., P.O. Box 15779, Sacramento, CA 95852
Phone: (916) 321-1000

[Copyright](#) © [The Sacramento Bee](#)