

Setting the Record Straight - Rebuttal to AKC claims



Special interests are distorting the facts about the California Healthy Pets Act. Using scare tactics and outlandish claims, those with a personal financial interest are clouding the debate with misinformation.

It's time to set the record straight. Here are just a few of the claims about the California Healthy Pets Act taken right from the literature of our opponents -- followed by the facts about what the Act (AB 1634) would really do.

Claim: "Mandatory spay/neuter laws are not an effective way to solve animal control problems."

Fact: Universal spay/neuter laws are proven approaches to reduce pet overpopulation. Shelter populations in Santa Cruz County dropped by 50% after a universal spay/neuter law was adopted. Ten California jurisdictions, including Sacramento, Lake and Stanislaus Counties and the cities of San Bernardino and Sacramento, have all adopted universal spay/neuter ordinances.

Claim: "More regulations increase the workload of already financially strained animal control offices, making it even more difficult for them to perform their duties."

Fact: The California Animal Control Directors Association along with the State Humane Association of California assisted in crafting the language of the California Healthy Pets Act. As more pets are spayed and neutered, the costs and burden of sheltering animals will go down because the unwanted pet population will decline.

Claim: "Spaying and neutering is a surgical procedure that may not be right for all animals. A licensed veterinarian should perform these procedures only after consultation with the owner and a thorough physical examination."

Fact: Nothing in the California Healthy Pets Act prohibits a pet owner from taking their pet to their favorite practitioner. While drafting the language, top veterinarians in the state have ensured the animals' health is the first priority. AB 1634 has a specific medical exemption for any pet if its veterinarian feels spaying or neutering is not in the pet's best interest.

Claim: "Dog shows and events bring millions of dollars in revenue to local California economies. Passage of AB 1634 would send a message that AKC events are not welcome within the state of California."

Fact: It's just not true: the California Healthy Pets Act has a specific exemption for show and sporting dogs in Section 122336.2(a)(2). And right now, taxpayers in California pay over \$250 million every year to shelter and euthanize unwanted animals. Imagine what that money could do if it was invested in strengthening California's economy.

Claim: “AB 1634 does not exempt dogs brought into the state for exhibition from the mandatory spay/neuter or intact animal permit requirements. If the proposed legislation becomes law, AKC event participants would abandon California shows for venues in other states.”



Fact: Not true. The California Healthy Pets Act contains a specific exemption for non-resident show dogs.

Claim: “Should AB 1634 be adopted, California would not only have the dubious distinction of being the least dog friendly state in the nation, but could also potentially suffer economic losses in the millions of dollars.”

Fact: California taxpayers now pay over \$250 million a year to shelter unwanted pets and euthanize (kill) over half. And truly, the least pet friendly practice is putting to death hundreds of thousands of abandoned dogs and cats every year. The California Healthy Pets Act is a practical and humane solution.

Claim: “Responsible owners should be allowed to use their own discretion in determining whether to alter their animals, spay/neuter requirements target all owners regardless of their actions.”

Fact: Taxpayers are bearing the burden of unaltered animals. In a ten year period nearly \$2.75 billion was spent to shelter animals - and over half of those animals are tragically put to death because they cannot find homes.

Claim: “The revenue that California stands to lose if dog shows are forced out of the state as they would be under the provisions of AB 1634.”

Fact: AB 1634 does not prohibit or regulate dog shows in any way. In fact, there is a specific exemption for show dogs from both California and out-of-state.

Claim: “Strongly enforced animal control laws (such as leash laws) and increased public education efforts are better ways to address the issue of irresponsible dog ownership.”

Fact: Voluntary programs and public education have been implemented in the last decade, and just aren’t working. Conservatively, nearly 1,000,000 cats and dogs were in shelters last year in California at a cost of over \$250 million to taxpayers. Enough is enough. It’s time for a new approach; we must put an end to this antiquated non-solution.

The California Healthy Pets Act is a proven and common sense solution to a growing problem. It would save taxpayers money while making our neighborhoods safer and our pets healthier. It’s the right solution for California.

[Source for the quoted claims in this document is the California spay/neuter action center page of the American Kennel Club website, www.akc.org/canine_legislation/CA_action_center.cfm.]