



California Healthy Pets Act – Arguments For and Against AB 1634

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Arguments For AB 1634

The Fiscal Argument:

The State of California spends almost three billion dollars every decade to house and euthanize (kill) excess animals. Almost ten million animals pass through our animal shelters each decade. These animals are generated by many factors, including pet owners who allow either accidental or intentional pregnancies. Most people who allow their pet to breed do not understand the enormous fiscal and emotional impact to California.

As a taxpayer, this fiscal burden sits directly on your shoulders. The California Healthy Pets Act is a simple, straightforward way to begin to reduce this enormous fiscal burden, and to reduce the number of animals entering into and being killed in our shelter system.

The Santa Cruz Argument:

Santa Cruz passed a very similar law in 1995, and from 1995 to 2003, areas covered by the spay-neuter ordinance in Santa Cruz County showed a decrease in the number dogs sheltered of 56% and 60% for cats.

The Public Safety Argument:

Unaltered dogs are three-times more likely to attack humans and other animals. California suffers the nation's highest occurrences of dog bites, animal attacks and attack-related fatalities in the nation and children are the most common victims. We can reasonably expect to see this number reduced as the number of roaming, unaltered dogs is reduced.

The Volume of Supporters Argument:

The sheer volume of AB 1634 supporters indicates just how important this issue is for so many people.

In addition to the main sponsors of the bill (California Animal Control Directors Association, California Veterinary Medical Association, City of Los Angeles, Social Compassion in Legislation, State Humane Association of California), the bill is supported by:

- Over 25 Mayors and Councilmembers from across the state
- Over 20 Police Departments and Sheriffs from across the state
- A long list of Animal Control and Animal Services agencies from across California
- 40+ Humane Societies and SPCA's including virtually every major group in the state
- A myriad of veterinarians and vet clinics
- Virtually all the major animal welfare organizations involved in California
- Over 220 California based animals rescue organizations including virtually every major rescue group.

- Over 40 "Celebrity" endorsements
- Over 100 other organizations across California
- Over 10,000 individual Californians who have written their Legislators so far, a volume of support described as "unprecedented" by lawmakers and virtually doubling the amount of letters sent by the opposition.

The Education Argument:

An "education only" approach is not effective enough to stem the enormous flow of excess pets.

A multitude of spay & neuter education programs have been in use in California for decades. Low cost spay & neuter programs are pervasive in the state, available to every resident. Virtually every Californian adult has heard about the necessity of spay & neuter, and yet the problem persists. The reasons that an "education only" approach has not work are varied, but not important to the core point: the approach is not effective enough.

The Law Enforcement Argument:

When an officer responds to a distress call, the last thing he or she wants to deal with is a stray dog or aggressive dog before they can take care of the real problem. This legislation will make law enforcement officers safer, and help them keep our communities safer, by reducing the number of stray and aggressive dogs on the streets.

AB 1634 contains sensible, clear exceptions for breeders and agencies that raise police dogs. That's one reason some of the state's biggest law enforcement agencies have endorsed the bill.

The Medical Argument:

Early spay and neuter surgeries performed on cats and dogs has been safely and effectively practiced in the United States for over 25 years. The nation's highest esteemed veterinary medical health professionals all advocate early spay and neuter in cats and dogs to combat pet overpopulation. These animal health leaders include the American Veterinary Medical Association ("AVMA"), the California Veterinary Medical Association, the American Animal Hospital Association, the Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights, HSUS, ASPCA, UC Davis Veterinary College and other respected veterinary colleges.

Not only is early spay and neuter proven to be safe and effective, it provides numerous health benefits and protections for cats and dogs. For male animals this includes partial or complete protection from testicular cancer and tumors; prostate tumors and infections; and perineal and inguinal hernias and infections. In female animals it prevents: breast cancer; mammary tumors; uterine infections; false pregnancies; mastitis; transmissible venereal sarcoma; ovarian cancer, cysts and infections; uterine tumors; and chronic endometritis. Spaying and neutering also prevents generational continuation of harmful congenital defects and genetic traits such as epilepsy and hip dysplasia. Most importantly, spaying and neutering prevents unplanned, unwanted litters of animals.

The Moral Argument:

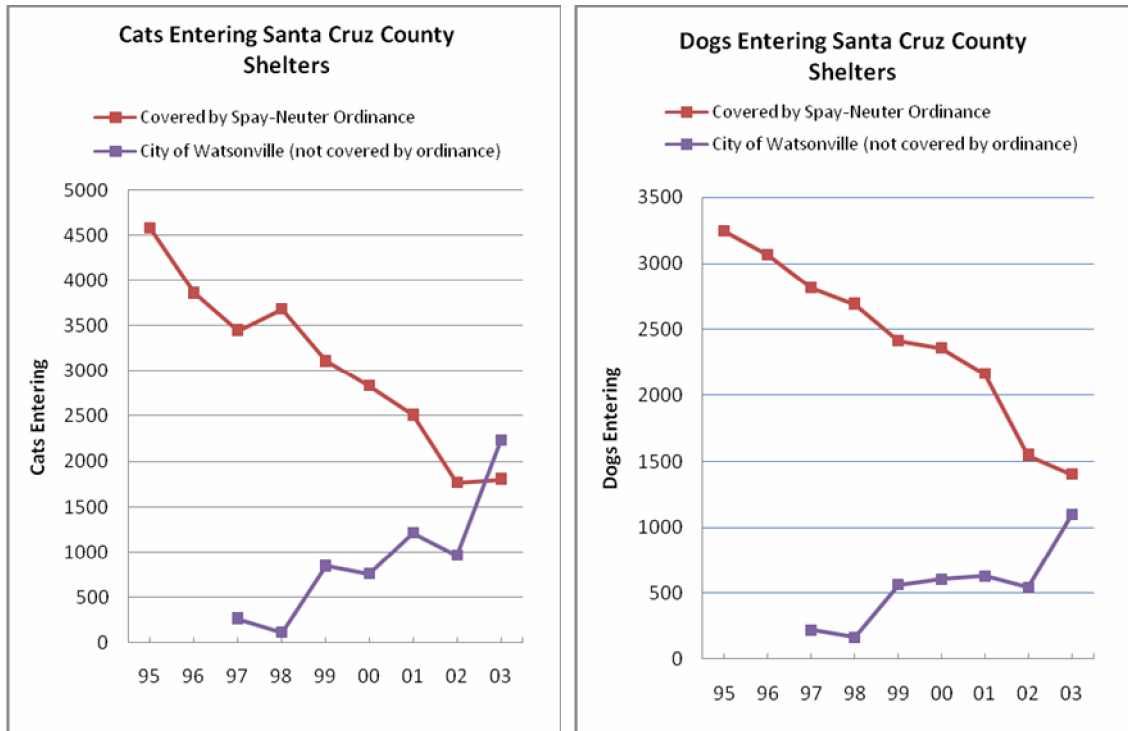
It is simply morally unacceptable for a civilized society to spend 3 billion dollars and kill 5 million animals every decade. We must take pro-active steps to curb this problem today, or it will be with us for decades to come.

Arguments Against AB 1634

Santa Cruz passed this law and it didn't work! The numbers are wrong!!

Rebuttal: From 1995 to 2003, areas covered by the spay-neuter ordinance in Santa Cruz County showed a decrease in the number dogs sheltered of 56% and 60% for cats (this area includes the City of Santa Cruz, the City of Scotts Valley, and the unincorporated area of the County — representing the bulk of the county's population).

By contrast, the City of Watsonville — which did not adopt the spay-neuter ordinance until 2004 — shows an increase in shelter intakes of nearly 400% for dogs and more than 700% for cats from 1997 to 2003.



Data Sources: Santa Cruz SPCA, City of Watsonville

Lumping all of Santa Cruz County's shelters together, as the opponents of the Healthy Pets Act have done in their own analysis, is misleading, since Watsonville did not enact the Santa Cruz spay-neuter ordinance until 2004. When you separate Watsonville from the areas in the county that adopted the spay-neuter ordinance in late 1994, the picture becomes clear: universal spaying and neutering works.

This law punishes hobby breeders!!

Rebuttal: The titles hobby breeder and amateur breeder have been coined by "low volume" breeders in an effort to make themselves seem innocuous, but the terms do not reflect any legal standing.

According to a 2001 analysis by the State Board of Equalization, "any breeder making more than two sales of puppies or kittens during any 12-month period is required to obtain a seller's permit and report the tax on those sales".*

In other words, anyone in California who sells two or more animals per year is already required by law to obtain a permit and pay taxes on the income. The vast majority of current breeders in California do not follow this requirement.

(* From "STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION STAFF LEGISLATIVE BILL ANALYSIS", Bill SB 236, "Current Law" section, pertaining to Revenue and Taxation Code Section 6019.)

This law will eliminate pets!!

Rebuttal: In the best case scenario, the excess animals entering our shelters will be significantly reduced, but not eliminated, under a universal spay & neuter law.

There simply is no realistic scenario that leads to a shortage of animals or difficulty in obtaining an animal from either a shelter or a breeder. Cities and states with universal spay & neuter laws have been able to reduce the number of excess animals, but there has never been an instance where the law resulted in a shortage of pets or difficulty in obtaining pets, either purebred or mutts.

This law is created by animal extremists!!

Rebuttal: AB 1634 was originated by a bi-partisan group of local animal control directors and vets across the state, who realize that the ethical and fiscal burden caused by the overpopulation crisis needs a state-wide solution. Disingenuous members of the opposition who attempt to tie the bill to animal extremists are searching for a way to deny the scale of the problem, and think it useful to their cause to paint the bill with a simple, reactionary brush.

Some animal rights groups have written support letters for the bill and are therefore listed as 'supporters' in our documentation.

This is a local government issue!!

Rebuttal: The bill was actually originated by local government entities who realize that a state-wide solution is the only way to combat this problem. The fight to implement this bill could never be waged at each of the individual levels of local government. It is state money, not local money, being lost to this issue through the "Hayden" mandate, currently costing the state millions of dollars each year. It is state taxes, not local taxes, that are being evaded by current breeders who do not report their income.

If you believe that this issue is serious enough to require local intervention, it follows that you should support a solution that addresses the issue in a much more successful way than local government ever could.

Maddie's Fund will not fund any more spay and neuter programs in California if AB 1634 passes!!

Rebuttal: There are no organizations in California currently receiving Maddie's Fund grants that would lose the funds if AB 1634 went into law today.

Los Angeles passed a spay / neuter law in 2000 and it didn't work!!

Rebuttal: The Los Angeles ordinance did not take effect until March, 2007.

A quote read by Mr. Levine on the Assembly floor was "fake" and came from a "PETA handbook"!!

Rebuttal: The quote actually was written and sent the day before the Assembly vote, and Mr. Levine who found it worthy of sharing with his colleagues.

We tracked down the author and asked her to comment on the opposition's claim, here is her reply:

"I can assure you that I am not a PETA member, I am in the trenches of animal control and trying to make a difference. I know that I will never work myself out of a job, I would like to have a job worth working for....This is a career of choice and I want to make it a career of respect and compassion, much like we believe it to be. Thanks so much to Assembly Levine for his hard work and dedication to this bill. It gives all of us in Animal Control hope..."

Mandatory spay/neuter laws are not an effective way to solve animal control problems!!

Rebuttal: Universal spay/neuter laws are proven approaches to reduce pet overpopulation. Shelter populations in Santa Cruz County dropped by over 50% after a universal spay/neuter law was adopted.

The bill will eliminate show dogs / police dogs / guide dogs / rescue dogs / etc!!

Rebuttal: The bill contains 20 common sense exceptions for guide dogs, show dogs, sporting dogs, law enforcement dogs, search and rescue dogs, service dogs, signal dogs, purebred dogs, pets that are elderly, pets that are in poor health, pets that are ill, pets that are non-residents and pets that have won titles for conformation, obedience, agility, carting, protection, rally, working or herding competitions.