



The Honorable Gloria Negrete McLeod
Chair, Senate Local Government Committee
State Capitol, Room 5046, Sacramento, CA 95814

July 2, 2007

Attention: Peter Detwiler, Committee Consultant

AB1634, "California Healthy Pets Act", Amended June 27 & All Future versions – OPPOSED

Please include Pensacola Dog Fanciers Association, Inc. to the list of Opponents in the Bill Analysis of AB1634 for your Committee

Dear Senator Negrete McLeod:

PDFFA represents dog owners in from all areas of the country and we believe that AB 1634 will be detrimental to the sport of purebred dogs, as well as to all dog owners in California. As California is usually the lead state in such actions and the site of many large and prestigious dog shows featuring our breeds, we feel we have a stake in the decision. A native Californian, I myself have traveled to Northern California to show in a Specialty Dog Show and many of us do make such treks.

PDFFA was founded in 1936 and represents dog owners and breeders of many interests, promoting responsible ownership, training and the sport of dogs. We give classes, agility, conformation and obedience events as well as community events involving dogs of all breeds and mixes. We have have members with therapy and search and rescue dogs. We donate money raised from events to shelters, vet schools, disaster relief, oxygen masks for pets for the fire departments, hurricane shelter crating, and give educational and health seminars as well as community training classes. Individuals participate in breed rescue and we are on a list at the shelter for dogs that come in and appear to be of a certain breed. Many of us have traveled many miles to transport a rescued animal, even if it isn't one of our own breed. Most of us are considered breeders, but as it is with most breeders, when you survey our members for number of breedings in a year, most have not bred a litter in over 10 years (some never) and the average is a litter every 5 years. This is not unusual. Studies show that individual breeders of cats and dogs who do show and maintain one or two breeds are responsible for less than 6% of animals found in shelters. There are relatively few breeders who can afford to own a breeding kennel. We tend to own more than one neutered animal and most of those sold as pets are required to be neutered. We do that by choice as we care about the welfare of our breeds and our puppies. Most of us only breed when we want a puppy from the litter and we may have 3 generations living in our house.

It is a fallacy that mixed breeds are healthier than purebreds. People who adopt from shelters often find themselves spending a great deal on veterinarian bills. It is the show breeder who runs hip, heart, thyroid, eye, elbow and, blood tests, etc. on those dogs they intend to breed. When you buy from a responsible breeder you have a very good idea of what is behind the dogs' parents for at least 3 generations, usually 5, as well as breed characteristics. These tests are not cheap and the supposition that we can just tack the price of a breeder license on to the price of a puppy does not come from an educated understanding of what is involved. As the price of well-bred puppies with responsible contracts climb, the irresponsible breeder and puppy mills that don't have to pay those prices become the place for people wanting a purebred puppy to go for theirs. Also of late, foreign countries are filling the void created by punitive breeder bans and licenses. It is one reason ignorant owners with poorly bred animals think they can make money breeding Fifi, but they needn't get the price of a well bred animal from an educated buyer and we do everything we can to help educate the public. Unfortunately, we don't have the money of the lobbyists of animal rights organizations who misrepresent breeders, shelter figures and costs of the legislations they push through the back door and legislators don't have the time to do the research. People tend to go with emotions instead of facts and it is hard to be heard above the furor. Our club has been an active force in our local legislation and did get our local board of commissioners to forego a breeding ban in this area after bringing them true figures and exposing illegal activities of a bidder for our local animal shelter (ultimately fired from the position they held in another county). We have a very good relationship with our area shelters, having helped them when they were in need and one warden is a member of our club. (I also served as an animal warden in Fairfax County Virginia.)

Facts (Most of these are available on the NAIA and CFA web pages*):

1. Generally, numbers in all shelters have gone down – not just in areas with spay and neuter requirements. A major reason in large counties is that animals are spayed and neutered before adoption. (An early study showed that many of the animals going to shelters were bred from unaltered shelter dogs.) The California figures for the counties that the proponents of this bill put forth are not consistent with what the figures presented by the county governments show. Some shelters even take in dogs from other shelters to fill the requests for adoptions of small breeds. This program needs to be expanded upon...yet some humane shelters are importing dogs from other countries to fit the adoption needs, while crying about how many dogs are being put down in this country.

2. When the cost of unaltered pet licenses goes up beyond double, and even if it is quite a bit, for un-neutered animals, fewer licenses are sold. Face it, the average person feels they are being punished and taxed without representation simply for owning an animal they choose not to neuter, and there are reasons not to neuter. (The first wolfhound I had spayed died the next morning of shock.) That doesn't mean the animal will be bred. I've owned far more un-neutered animals that I haven't bred than I have bred. I've neutered more than I haven't neutered.
3. Those counties that offer low cost spay and neuter clinics are the counties that have lower shelter numbers. That alone makes a difference as does education, not unreasonable license fees. Passing mandatory spay and neuter laws can lead to the increase in the price vets offer for such surgery. As it is, they keep the price down to encourage selective surgery.
4. Those counties that have passed breeding laws and high license fees have seen a drop in compliance and an increase in expenses to enforce those laws. The blueprint of this law was passed in Santa Cruz County. You are told it will save money. **Animal control expenses in Santa Cruz County have skyrocketed since the law took effect, from \$635,296 in 1995 to more than \$1.1 million in 2005 – an increase of 93%.** That can be proved by looking at the facts available from Santa Cruz.
5. Spaying a bitch is a surgical procedure that can result in death. Some cancers and growth anomalies are related to other problems – see **letters from CA vets:**
http://www.naiaonline.org/body/articles/archives/Cal_vets.htm
It should be a thought out choice, not a law that invades personal choice .

Responsible owners who already complying with local animal control laws will be unfairly punished by AB 1634, while irresponsible owners will continue to make problems for the community and local shelters. I am one of those that would be under the thumb of this bill. Not puppy millers, not professional pet shops, not breeders in Mexico...the individual hobby breeder, the one breeding an occasional litter, for which I have a waiting list at prices that already mean I lose money when I breed. I may not choose to breed an animal until it is 4-5 years of age, which in my breed is the age of full maturity. Because it may have 10-12 puppies, one breeding puts me over the breeding limit proposed in this bill, yet I may breed that animal once in it's lifetime while a Chihuahua owner would have to breed 4 times to have that many puppies.

According to national statistics, 40% of fatal vehicle accidents involve drunk drivers. Ignoring the faulty argument that, therefore, sober drivers cause more fatal accidents, (no more faulty than all un-neutered animals are bred) we could propose that to control drunk drivers, we need to make consumption of all

alcohol substances illegal. Oops – we’ve tried that, let’s rethink. OK, everyone who drinks **any** alcohol has to pay \$300 for their driver’s license. Only teetotalers get their license for \$35. Those claiming they are teetotalers must take a shot that makes them sick if they imbibe so much as a beer or glass of wine. This makes every bit as much sense as making everyone who owns an un-neutered animal pay a fine (and that’s what it is.) People caught driving drunk need high fines and jail time. People whose dogs are caught at large need high fines...feral and loose animals are the second biggest reason for dogs in shelters. The biggest reason... owners turning their animals in, (60% in Fairfax County, Va) need to be educated. (Let’s be realistic, in an age where people don’t stay with the person they swore to love, honor and obey, owning a dog forever isn’t going to be a commandment on everyone’s list.) They need to buy their animals from sources that screen because they care about where their animals go and require non-breeding contracts or spay/neuter to own a non-show animal. This bill shuts those sources down. It doesn’t shut down irresponsible breeding or those in the profit business of breeding. Professionals, exempted in this bill, can take it off their expenses – hobby breeders cannot. It does cost more to try and ferret out those people who go underground and there will be no governmental savings, nor has there been where these laws have been passed.(If nothing else, do look up the real figures.) It gives neighbors cause to turn in neighbors they don’t like (more animal complaints – and they already top the enforcement complaint list.) It makes tattlers out of vets – leading people to avoid shots so no one knows about their pets. It doesn’t stop people from buying from other countries or states. It does affect dog and cat shows in California...and they bring in a lot of community dollars.

The downward numbers in shelters are already there, as are the laws to control irresponsible owners and inhumane breeders. Please don’t pass this one.

Sincerely,

By direction of the Board
Sue McClure
AKC Delegate
Pensacola Dog Fanciers Association, Inc.

*<http://www.cfainc.org/articles/legislative/pet-overpopulation.html>
<http://www.naiaonline.org/issues/index.htm>
<http://www.naiaonline.org/body/articles/archives/kingcty.htm>

cc: Committee Members