

## Chicago Puppies May Face Mandatory Spay-Neuter

**Proposed ordinance also sets new requirements for dog and cat breeders.**

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The dog and cat population is making news in Chicago once again with the resurfacing of a mandatory spay-neuter proposal, which attempts to address the issues that stalled the original bill.

In the new proposal, set to be voted on at a committee meeting March 12, a \$100 fine would be imposed on a third offense for not having a pet spayed or neutered by 6 months of age. The original fine was set at \$500.

Sponsors of the ordinance say the goal is to prevent attacks by packs of stray dogs and to reduce the dog population in the city's shelters. Opponents, which include the Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association, maintain that spay-neuter surgery should not be a mandate, and prefer voluntary methods.

The new measure, released by Alderman Edward Burke, also would establish the following guidelines for breeders:

- \* Prohibits the breeding of female dogs and cats more than once a year without special permission.
- \* Bans the sale of puppies and kittens before 8 weeks of age.
- \* Requires breeders to provide veterinary and vaccination records to puppy and kitten purchasers.
- \* Requires that the breeding permit number be displayed in any advertisement offering puppies or kittens for sale.

Exemptions are outlined in the proposal, including the following:

- \* If a licensed veterinarian certifies that the pet's health would best be served by spaying-neutering after a specified date.
- \* Dogs or cats with a valid breeding permit.
- \* Dogs or cats whose owners hold a valid animal care facility license.
- \* The dog is trained or is in the process of being trained as a service dog, police dog, or military dog.