

## New York Bill Targets Dog Tail Docking

**Practice would carry a fine of up to \$500 with passage of new state legislation.**

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Docking dog tails may carry a fine of \$500 in New York with the passage of a new bill that seeks to make the practice unlawful.

New York State Assembly Bill 7218 states that any person who cuts the bone, tissues, muscles, or tendons of the tail of any dog is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by not more than \$500. The measure does not apply to dogs who have been certified as tail docked prior to Aug. 1, 2009.

As written, AB 7218 calls for making all instances of tail docking unlawful, except those deemed necessary by a duly licensed veterinarian to protect the life or health of a dog. In addition, it would make anyone who shows or exhibits a dog with a cut or altered tail subject to a misdemeanor charge, punishable by a fine of up to \$500.

Proponents say the enactment of this bill would ensure that dogs are not caused unnecessary risk and pain by cosmetic tail docking. Opponents, including the American Kennel Club, say owners, in close consultation with their veterinarians — not the government — should make informed decisions about their pets' healthcare.

This bill has been referred to the New York Assembly Agriculture Committee.

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