

California Pet Spay-Neuter Bill Fails Assembly

Bill that would require state's dogs and cats to be sterilized failed on Assembly floor.

Posted: September 11, 2009, 5 a.m. EDT

California Senate Bill 250, which would require spay or neuter surgery for most of the state's dogs and cats, failed on the Assembly floor 28-42 on Sept. 8. Reconsideration was granted, allowing the bill to be voted on again Sept. 9. Results had not been announced by press time.

The bill had been amended on the Assembly floor Aug. 31.

SB 250, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Dean Florez, calls on cat owners to spay or neuter their cats at 6 months of age if the cats are allowed to roam at large. The bill also requires the sterilization of all dogs at 6 months old unless the owner gets an unaltered dog license.

The bill also now would require anyone who sells or adopts out an intact dog, regardless of the dog's age, to provide the licensing agency with the name and address of the new owner within 10 days. Any existing unaltered dog's license number and microchip number for the dog must appear on the document transferring ownership of the dog to the new owner.

The bill also provides that an intact dog with a current intact license will not be required to be sterilized on a first offense: "In any case in which the owner or custodian of a dog with an unaltered dog license is cited for permitting the dog to roam at large, the license of the dog shall not be subject to revocation for a first violation, if at the time the dog roams at large the dog possesses a current license," as specified.

Exemptions are extended "to any owner or breeder of a dog used in the business of shepherding, herding or guarding livestock, or cultivating agricultural products, to any owner or breeder of a dog used for hunting or for the purposes of field trials, or to any owner or trainer of a guide dog, signal dog, service dog, peace officer's dog or firefighter's dog, as defined, provided the dog is licensed, as specified, and the owner or breeder has purchased any required hunting license."

The American Kennel Club issued a statement Sept. 9 thanking all the fanciers, concerned dog owners, breeders, federations and clubs who worked to defeat this legislation.

"While the battle is not yet over, it is clear that the educational efforts have paid off and that legislators have seen that SB 250 will negatively impact responsible owners and will not improve animal control in California," according to the AKC.

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council also opposes the bill.