

## Domestic Violence Dog Protection Laws Take Effect

**New state laws in California and Illinois allow judges to include dogs and other pets in domestic violence restraining orders.**

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In California and Illinois, pets caught in the middle of family violence now have a shield of protection. State laws passed in 2007 allowing courts to include pets in domestic violence restraining orders took effect Jan. 1, 2008.

The new legislation allows judges to order the accused abuser to stay away from the animal while granting the victim exclusive care of the pet.

Studies show that approximately 25 to 40 percent of domestic violence victims do not leave their abusers because they are concerned about what will happen to their pets or livestock, according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). And 71 percent of pet-owning women in shelters reported a pet had been threatened, injured, or killed by their abuser.

The two states join Maine, Vermont, New York, and Connecticut in implementing legislation that protects pets from domestic violence. Several other states are considering similar measures.