

Lassie Heir Helps Defeat California Spay-Neuter Bill

The famous dog's heir battled over California's spay-neuter bill with fellow TV icon Bob Barker.

Posted: July 17, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

Call it a clash of two TV icons.

On one side of California's controversial spay-neuter bill (AB 1634) was Bob Barker, the retired host of "The Price Is Right," and on the other, Laddie, a ninth-generation descendent of TV star Lassie.

At issue was legislation that would have required most California pet owners to spay or neuter their dogs and cats. (Read about the legislation)

A state Senate committee dismissed the bill Wednesday, but not before Barker and Laddie did some politicking. Barker supported the legislation and Laddie's owner, Hollywood dog trainer Bob Weatherwax, whose father, Rudd Weatherwax, found and trained the original Lassie, was against the measure.

Barker turned lobbyist in June when he phoned several wavering lawmakers to urge their support of the Assembly version of the bill, which went on to pass by only one vote.

Lassie and Weatherwax were among the hundreds who showed up Wednesday to protest the bill when it reached the state Senate's local government committee panel, which ultimately scuttled the measure.

The bill's sponsor, Assemblyman Lloyd Levine (D-Van Nuys) says he plans to reintroduce a version of the bill next year.

Read more updates about California's spay-neuter bill >>