

California Senate Committee To Hear Spay-Neuter Bill

Hearing dates have been set for a committee to consider a spay-neuter bill as well as additional regulations for pet stores.

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California's Senate Business, Professions & Economic Development Committee will hear testimony regarding the California Pet Store Act (AB 1347) and the California Healthy Pets Act (AB 1634) on July 9 at 1:30 p.m. in room 3191 at the state Capitol.

The pet store act overwhelmingly passed the state Assembly with a 75 to 1 vote in late May. It would establish specific care criteria standards that retailers, not breeders, would have to adhere to or face penalties. The Pet Industry Joint Council (PIJAC) supports the bill and plans to submit testimony in favor of it at the July hearing.

The California Healthy Pets Act, however, is facing more opposition. Introduced by Lloyd Levine (D-Van Nuys), the bill narrowly passed through the Assembly in early June. It has the support of many of the state's animal rescues and shelters as well as the California Veterinary Medical Assn., but PIJAC, the American Kennel Club (AKC), several dog clubs and the North American Police Work Dog Association have all voiced opposition.

The proposal would mandate all of the state's dogs and cats – with some exceptions – older than 4 months old be spayed or neutered. Those exceptions include service animals and dogs or cats raised specifically for showing.

Opponents say the law is too broad and does not leave room for pets raised in hobby situations or the so-called designer dogs that might not fit into a specific show category, but are bred for a specific look, nonetheless.

The AKC contends the bill would be detrimental to the sport of purebred dogs, fail to achieve a reduction in pet overpopulation and cost California millions of dollars in lost revenue.

Those in support of the bill say it would save the lives of hundreds of thousands of unwanted pets euthanized each year, as well as reduce taxpayer costs associated with stray dogs and cats.