



WHY THE CAT FANCIERS' ASSOCIATION OPPOSES CALIFORNIA AB 1634 PENALTIES AND STERILIZATION FOR IMPOUNDMENT OR "COMPLAINTS"

AB 1634 originally mandated sterilization of ALL dogs/cats over 6 months of age with "exceptions" impossible for breeders or others to meet. In 2008 AB 1634 is an entirely new bill – unfair to pet owners and expensive for shelters.

Neuter/spay surgery is not without risks. Mandating surgery as a civil penalty for an owned pet who is impounded or the subject of a complaint is unjustified, especially when there are no exceptions for a valuable pedigreed breeding cat or an injured, sick or pregnant cat.

Owning an intact cat is not a crime nor inherently dangerous. Imposing a civil penalty or sterilization as punishment when not rationally related to the reason for impound or a "complaint" does not solve any problem.

PENALTY OR STERILIZATION ON IMPOUNDMENT:

- A cat could be impounded in a shelter because of disaster, fire, protective custody, malicious release or a pet sitter mistake. Sterilization for cats on SECOND impoundment regardless of the reason is extremely severe. A second impoundment could happen within 1 day or several years. Every day a cat is in the shelter while the owner searches for written veterinary proof of spay puts the cat at risk for infectious diseases.
- A civil penalty of \$50 for first impoundment of an intact cat will mean abandonment for some cats. Reclaim rate for impounded cats is extremely low (2% to 3%) for a variety of reasons. Ownership of freeroaming cats is often not clearly established and the threat of a civil penalty will mean more cats will be ignored if taken to a shelter.

PENALTY OR STERILIZATION IF CITED FOR A "COMPLAINT":

- The owner of an intact cat that is the subject of a "complaint" may be cited and, if cited, the owner would have to pay a \$50 civil penalty. An oral or written claim that *ALLEGES* the CAT or owner has violated any state or local animal law, even if false or mistaken, could result in sterilization of a breeding cat. The two complaints could be on the same day and from the same person. Complaints from disgruntled neighbors may be unrelated to any animal problem. There is no conviction necessary, and no due process for the penalty/sterilization.
- Most owned cats are already sterilized – studies show 87% to 94%. There will be little revenue for animal control from penalties but many complaints that require officers to respond. Often complaints are invalid or owners not at home. Complaints against freeroaming "loosely owned" cats will simply mean denied responsibility/ownership to avoid \$50 penalties.
- AB 1634 will lead to harassment of pedigreed cat breeders due to "complaints" that do not need to be proven. AB 1634 supporters have made clear their disdain for all purposeful breeding. Activists will use this bill as a tool to assert violations of current or future laws.

SUMMARY:

AB1634 is forfeiture of valuable reproductive rights for pedigreed cats.

Cats will be abandoned in shelters rather than reclaimed if impounded.

A cat owner would be forced to sterilize a cat even if pregnant or if surgery would endanger health.

Administration and enforcement costs will go up for jurisdictions.

Language is vague and has been misinterpreted by lawmakers, supporters and opponents.

The California Department of Finance Bill Analysis, July 1, 2008 clearly states this bill “may result in more animals being abandoned or surrendered.”

This analysis warns of “an increase in the General Fund costs of the existing Animal Adoption mandate, which currently costs more than \$20 million” to the state to reimburse local agencies. The Department states the bill is unclear in its definition of “complaint”.

AB 1634 is misdirected and badly conceived – PLEASE VOTE NO!

**The Cat Fanciers’ Association (CFA), Manasquan, NJ.
Founded in 1906**

The Cat Fanciers’ Association (CFA) is a non-profit organization and the largest registry of pedigreed cats in the world. Our member cat clubs are active in California educating the public, providing support for feline health studies, disaster relief, feral cat programs, breed rescue and shelters. CFA’s mission is to preserve and promote the pedigreed breeds of cats and to enhance the well-being of ALL cats.

Contact:

Joan Miller

CFA Legislative Coordinator

JMillerArt@aol.com