

AB 1881 (Santiago)

Dog and Cat Bill of Rights

Bill Summary

AB 1881 promotes the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of dogs and cats by informing potential adopters of the animal's needs before they adopt. This bill would require a public animal control agency or shelter to post a copy of the Dog and Cat Bill of Rights accessible to public view.

Existing Law

Makes animal abuse, including tormenting, depriving of necessary sustenance, food, and shelter, a wobblers offense (California Penal Code Section 597).

Background

Nearly 1 in 5 Americans have adopted a pet during the pandemic. Pet owners have responsibilities of taking care for their pet that goes beyond just feeding and grooming. Dogs and cats also need to be respected as living beings that have physical, mental, and emotional health needs. Studies have shown that dogs can experience positive emotions as well as other similar empathic responses. Cats also experience their own emotions that need to be supported.

Need for AB 1881

Animal companionship was very appealing during the isolation of the pandemic. With the state potentially re-opening, potential adopters must not forget the responsibilities associated with animal ownership. To prevent animal cruelty and neglect, potential owners must be informed that dogs and cats have certain standards of treatment prior to making a commitment to adoption.

AB 1881 will ensure that potential adopters know and understand that animals have rights. Specifically, this bill will:

- State that dogs and cats have the right to be free from exploitation, cruelty, neglect, and abuse.
- State that dogs and cats have the right to mental stimulation and exercise, and nutritious food, sanitary water, and shelter.
- Mandate each public animal control agency, shelter, society for the prevention of cruelty, to animal shelter, or rescue group to post the Dog and Cat Bill of rights.

This bill will help dog and cat adopters know the responsibilities of taking care of their pet's physical, emotional, and mental health in order to better protect their wellbeing.

Support

Social Compassion in Legislation (Sponsor)

Opposition

None on file.

For More Information

Tom Steel, Legislative Aide
Office of Assembly Member Miguel Santiago
916.319.2053 | Tom.Steel@asm.ca.gov