



AB 1881: 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 notice with the treatment standards for dogs and cats accessible to public view.

Existing Law

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

Background

Nearly 1 in 5 Americans 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, some adopters are returning their pets because they cannot care for them as they could during the height of the pandemic.

Animal shelters and adoption agencies are not currently required to inform the potential adopter of the standards of care dogs and cats deserve. To ensure dogs and cats are treated appropriately, potential owners must understand that dogs and cats deserve certain standards of treatment prior to making a commitment to adoption.

AB 1881 will help ensure that potential adopters know and understand that dogs and cats deserve standards of treatment. Specifically, this bill affirms dogs and cats deserve:

- To be free from exploitation, cruelty, neglect, and abuse.
- Daily mental stimulation and appropriate exercise, and nutritious food, sanitary water, and shelter.
- Preventive and therapeutic healthcare.
- To be properly identified through tags, microchips, or other humane means.
- To be spayed and neutered to prevent unwanted litters.

This bill also mandates that each public animal control agency, shelter, society for the prevention of cruelty, animal shelter, or rescue group to post a notice with the above treatment standards, with a penalty of \$250 for non-compliance.

By establishing baseline treatment standards for dogs and cats, AB 1881 will help improve their overall wellbeing.

Support

Social Compassion in Legislation (Sponsor)

A Passion for Paws

Ashley & Hobie Animal Welfare

Castillo Animal Veterinary

Compassionate Bay

Direct Action Everywhere

Los Angeles Alliance for Animals

Our Honor

Plant-Based Advocates

Poison Free Malibu

Project Counterglow

Recycled Love Dog Rescue

Starfish Animal Rescue

Start Rescue

Take Me Home

The Paw Project

Women United for Animal Welfare

266 Individuals

Opposition

California Animal Welfare Association

Hangtown Kennel Club of Placerville, CA Inc.

San Diego Humane Society

For More Information

Tom Steel, Legislative Aide

Office of Assembly Member Miguel Santiago

916.319.2053 | Tom.Steel@asm.ca.gov