

February 22, 2022

The Honorable Miguel Santiago
California State Assembly
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1881 the Dog and Cat Bill of Rights - **SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Santiago:

I am writing in support AB 1881, the Dog and Cat Bill of Rights which will help promote the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of dogs and cats by informing potential adopters of the animal's needs before they adopt. Specifically, 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.

The rights enumerated in the bill include the right to: be free from exploitation, cruelty, neglect, and abuse; mental stimulation and exercise; access to nutritious food, sanitary water, and shelter; preventive and therapeutic health care; be properly identified through tags, microchips, or other humane means; be spayed and neutered to prevent unwanted litters.

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 cited in the Journal of Medical Ethics 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.

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.

With the passage of AB 1881, we will continue to elevate the emotional and mental needs of our pets while reiterating the basic needs such as food, water, and shelter. I thank you again for authoring this important legislation and urge your colleagues in the legislation to vote 'aye' on AB 1881.

Sincerely,