

Assembly Concurrent Resolution 86

Spay-and-Neuter Services and Staffing

Assembly Member Ash Kalra

SUMMARY

ACR 86 aims to address the pet overpopulation crisis by encouraging state, local, and nonprofit/private partners to develop and fund high-volume spay-and-neuter services across California. To fill new and existing spay-and-neuter staffing gaps, this resolution prompts the Veterinary Medical Board to encourage out-of-state veterinary professionals to register to practice in the state.

BACKGROUND

California's animal shelters are overcrowded and overwhelmed. One does not have to look far to find reports of at-capacity animal shelters [housing multiple dogs in one kennel](#), [turning away strays in need of care](#), and [euthanizing healthy, adoptable animals to free up space](#). While shelter staff do not want to take such extreme measures, they simply do not have the space and resources to entertain any other options.

Fortunately, high-volume spay-and-neuter services are an efficient and effective means of addressing this problem. Spay-and-neuter surgeries are simple, safe sterilization procedures that prevent pets from reproducing. Not only do they reduce dog and cat populations, but they also [offer animals several health benefits](#).

However, unsubsidized spay-and-neuter surgeries can cost [hundreds of dollars per animal](#), and the demand for free and affordable services far outstrips supply. This has led to [months-long waitlists](#) for many low-and-no-cost procedures. The [chronic veterinarian shortage](#) has also exacerbated this issue, leaving spay-and-neuter providers scrambling to find staffing for their services.

In an attempt to better fund spay-and-neuter efforts, the Legislature created the Pet Lover's License Plate Program, which offers grants to veterinary facilities for spay-and-neuter services. Unfortunately, this program has underperformed,

only making [\\$488,000](#) available in 2023. This has left millions in spay-and-neuter needs unaddressed. Other solutions include the licensure of out-of-state veterinary professionals. These ["reciprocity" licenses](#) are issued in one-year increments by the Veterinary Medical Board. Though this does not negate the need for expanded veterinary training opportunities in the state, it will help to relieve key staffing shortages.

SOLUTION

ACR 86 would urge the Veterinary Medical Board to encourage out-of-state veterinarians and veterinary technicians to register to practice in the state of California for the purpose of performing spay-and-neuter surgeries and other medical services that mitigate pet overpopulation. This resolution also encourages state, local, and nonprofit/private partners to develop and fund high-volume spay-and-neuter clinics across the state. Furthermore, it recognizes the pressing need to adequately fund and support spay-and-neuter programs and pertinent pet licensing, breeding, and sterilization laws.

Finally, ACR 86 asks the state to encourage the public to adopt animals from shelters instead of buy them from breeders. Though this clause does not specifically pertain to spay-and-neuter services, increased animal adoption can help amplify the population management effects of robust sterilization practices.

SPONSORS

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