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Social Compassion
in Legislation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Assemblymember Maienschein and Social Compassion in Legislation introduce the P.E.T.S. Act

Funding for low- and no-cost spay and neuter programs to address California's pet overpopulation crisis

January 30, 2024, Sacramento, CA – Today, **Assemblymember Brian Maienschein (D-San Diego)** introduced AB 1983, the Preventing Euthanasia to Save (P.E.T.S.) Act, sponsored by Social Compassion in Legislation (SCIL). The bill will reinstate a voluntary tax check-off program that ran successfully for eight years and expired at the end of 2023. The program allows Californians to direct a portion of their state tax refund to a program that offers grants for low- and no-cost spay and neuter services.

The program, the official name of which will be the Pet Euthanasia Prevention Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund, will continue to be administered by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA).

With so many Californians unable to afford veterinary care for their dogs and cats, and shelters across the state overflowing with animals due to accidental and unwanted litters, the program is needed now more than ever.

"With AB 1983, Californians can make a voluntary donation using a portion of their tax return to help a program that offers grants for low-cost and no-cost spay/neuter services," said **Assemblymember Maienschein**. "These programs provide an effective means to control stray animal population numbers while safeguarding the health and well-being of the animals. These voluntary contributions will significantly decrease the number of homeless animals and minimize euthanasia rates."



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"I founded Social Compassion in Legislation in 2007 to tackle California's pet overpopulation problem," said **Judie Mancuso, Founder and President**. "We had made great strides through local and state legislation, but COVID was a game changer. Our progress was erased due to a temporary spike in consumer demand for puppies, combined with shelter closures, reduced availability of spay and neuter providers, the proliferation of "backyard" and "hobby" breeders using their animals to make extra money, and people purchasing unaltered pets from in- and out-of-state breeders rather than adopting from a shelter or rescue group. All these factors contributed to the crisis at hand. The tax check-off program is one more desperately needed funding source for spay and neuter surgeries."

Our local and state governments spend over \$400 million a year providing animal services, including the operation of shelters. Nonprofit rescue organizations spend millions more to pull dogs, cats and various other animals from shelters to save them from euthanasia, give them the medical care they need, and find them loving homes. Currently, the only ongoing funding mechanism for spay and neuter services is the Pet Lover's License Plate Fund, which SCIL introduced in 2013. It currently grants out approximately \$400,000 annually.

Funds received through the P.E.T.S. Act will be granted out in conjunction with the Pet Lover's Plate program. Combining the administration of the two programs will reduce administrative hours for CDFA.

To support AB1983 and Social Compassion in Legislation's work to save animals, please visit our website at www.SocialCompassioninLegislation.org