



SCIL
Social Compassion
in Legislation

February 23, 2024

The Honorable Jacqui Irwin
Chair, Assembly Committee on Revenue and Taxation
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 1983 (Maienschein) Income taxes: voluntary contributions: Dog and Cat Euthanasia Prevention
Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund. – SPONSOR LETTER**

Dear Assemblymember Irwin:

I write on behalf of Social Compassion in Legislation, proud sponsor of AB 1983, to respectfully ask for your support of this important legislation. Various factors are contributing to the current pet overpopulation problem in our state, the primary reason being lack of access to spay and neuter surgeries due to costs. AB 1983 will raise funds to help many California families spay and neuter their pet and thus saving countless animals from ending up in our states shelters where they cost taxpayers and, sadly, are euthanized when they aren't adopted.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, many Californians adopted animals from shelters, but unfortunately many more decided to buy from breeders. In response to this short-term uptick in demand for dogs, breeders pushed their animals to produce more litters while we also saw a surge in "backyard" breeders looking to make a quick dollar by breeding their family animals. Additionally, animal shelters around the state faced service disruptions and resource constraints which continue to affect how they are able to serve their communities.

At the same time as we saw a surge in the breeding of animals, access to affordable and timely veterinarian care dropped. Various factors have contributed to the lack of veterinarian access –a systemic lack of access to veterinary education, a mental health crisis in the veterinary profession pushing some to leave the practice, cost pressures due to inflation and corporate consolidation of veterinary practices, among other factors. The lack of access to affordable veterinary care has contributed to many animals not being spayed or neutered which has exacerbated the pet overpopulation problem.

Meanwhile, it is estimated that our local and state governments spend over \$400 million on operating animal shelters. That figure does not include the incalculable millions spent by nonprofit rescue organizations who pull dogs, cats, and various other animals from shelters before they are euthanized in order to save their lives and find them a loving home. Currently, the only ongoing funding for free or low-cost spay and neuter services are the approximately \$400,000 granted out annually through the Pet Lover's License Plate Fund for spay and neuter. Much more is needed.

AB 1983 will allow compassionate Californians to contribute their tax refunds to help solve the pet overpopulation crisis. Their contribution will alleviate the cost burden for many families that currently cannot afford to get their animal sterilized.

For these reasons, Social Compassion in Legislation is proud to sponsor AB 1983 and respectfully urge you and your colleagues to vote aye on this important measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nikolaus Sackett". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Nikolaus Sackett
Director of Legislative Affairs
Social Compassion in Legislation