



LETICIA CASTILLO

58TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Assembly Bill 1482: Bowie's Law

SUMMARY

AB 1482 will mandate new dog breeder standards for enforcement, including a microchip mandate, require all animal shelters to post all adoptable animals online, and require a comprehensive study on the solutions to shelter overcrowding.

BACKGROUND

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, California has seen a troubling surge in unwanted and abandoned pets, leading to significant strain on animal shelters statewide. Shelter Animals Count, a nonprofit that collects data on trends in shelter populations, reports that euthanasia comprised 11% of shelter animal outcomes for 2023 and 11% YTD in 2024.

According to the LA Times, the number of dogs put down at the seven shelters run by L.A. County Animal Care and Control almost doubled between 2020 and 2022. This reporting also found that more dogs were euthanized across the county shelter system because there was limited space and not enough interest from adopters.

In another instance, an analysis of Orange County Animal Control shelter statistics showed that the euthanasia rate in 2022 rose to 5.32% for adult dogs, an all-time high for the 2016–2022 period. The analysis further noted that 'compared to 2019, the pre-pandemic reference year often used by OCAC, the kill rate for adult dogs has doubled.'

ISSUE

Despite California spending tens of millions in the pursuit of becoming a 'no-kill state,' California animal shelters are euthanizing more healthy, adoptable dogs and cats than ever. Current law has proven largely insufficient in addressing these issues.

Unregulated 'backyard breeding' has led to unhealthy, inhumane conditions and abandoned animals who are neither microchipped nor vaccinated against infectious diseases.

Additionally, without guidance to update how animal shelters track adoptable animals in their care, shelters are only required to keep records of these animals on paper.

The Legislature should identify comprehensive solutions and take action to address current conditions in order to ease the suffering caused by shelter overcrowding and a lack of sufficient resources and regulations throughout the state.

THE BILL

AB 1482 will expand the definition of a dog breeder by lowering the number of dogs that must be bred for breeding regulations to apply, and will require that all dogs sold by breeders are microchipped and vaccinated, consistent with similar regulations imposed on animals adopted from shelters.

The bill also includes provisions requiring that shelters post the adoption availability of animals on their website or a third-party website.

Lastly, the bill will order the California Department of Food and Agriculture to conduct a study on overcrowding in California shelters, including ways the state can address these conditions.

SPONSOR

Social Compassion in Legislation

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