



MATT HANEY
Assemblymember, District 17

AB 2344 – Rehome Abused Animals Act

SUMMARY

Animals rescued from abuse should not be forced to spend months or even years in cages simply because a court case is still pending. But that is what is happening today. While cases drag on, these animals remain in shelters or animal control facilities far longer than necessary, taking up limited space and resources and facing greater risks of stress, illness, and lasting behavioral trauma.

AB 2344 offers a simple solution by allowing prosecutors to petition the court to issue an order for forfeiture in order to place abused animals with an appropriate agency or into a safe adoptive home before the case is resolved. This would help vulnerable animals leave overcrowded shelters sooner, reduce pressure on shelters, and ensure rescued animals get the care, stability, and second chance they deserve.

BACKGROUND

Right now, dogs and cats that are victims of animal cruelty cases are required to be held in an animal control center or shelter for further evaluation until the court orders that the case is complete. Many of these animals spend their time cooped up in tight spaces, competing for limited resources, which contribute to a decline in welfare.

EXISTING LAW

Current law requires animal shelters, rescue centers, and agencies to shelter animals involved in animal abuse cases until the case concludes. Prosecutors are unable to petition the court to give the animal to the appropriate animal care agencies or place the animal for adoption during

the process, resulting in prolonged shelter holds.

PROBLEM

When defendants do not show up to court on time, animals in abuse cases are often stuck in shelters or animal control for months while the case is delayed. The longer these animals stay in shelters, the more it costs shelters to care for them and the more likely the animals are to suffer physically and emotionally.

In Los Angeles County, it costs about \$105 a day to house just one animal. As more animals from cruelty cases remain in shelters for long periods, those costs continue to grow. Shelters are supposed to operate at about 75 to 80 percent capacity, but Los Angeles County shelters are currently operating at more than 100 percent capacity. That overcrowding means fewer resources and less care for every animal. In the worst cases, shelters may have to consider euthanasia simply to make room.

Long shelter stays also harm the animals themselves. Research has found that animals kept in shelters for long periods are much more likely to develop severe stress and behavior problems, making them harder to adopt. Some dogs become “kennel crazy” after being confined for too long, leading to anxiety, aggression, and even self-destructive behavior.

SOLUTION

AB 2344 allows prosecutors to file a petition requesting that animals involved in cruelty cases be forfeited to the city or county 30 days after the defendant fails to appear in court, as specified. The



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forfeiture hearing would happen in the same superior court that is handling the underlying case and within 14 days of the petition being filed. This process ensures due process while allowing animals to be placed into safe foster or adoptive homes much sooner.

SUPPORT

Social Compassion in Legislation (Sponsor)
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office (Co-Sponsor)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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