

WESTERN STATES POLICE CANINE ASSOCIATION
Working Dogs.....Making Our Jobs Safer

April 1, 2007

Western States Police Canine Association
213 Lavendar Court
Galt, California 95632

Assembly Member Mike Eng, Chair
Assembly Committee on Business and Professions
1020 N Street, Room 124
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attn: Tracy Rhine, Committee Consultant
Fax: (916) 319-3306

Re: AB 1634 (Levine) California Healthy Pets Act – OPPOSE-

Mr. Eng and Committee Members:

The Western States Police Canine Association opposes AB 1634 (as introduced and as revised 03/27/2007), mandatory spay/neuter of dogs and cats, and requests inclusion in the list opposition for the Bill Analysis in your committee.

Western States Police Canine Association is an organization of working law enforcement canine handlers and friends of law enforcement canines. We are dedicated to the training and handling of those quality working K9 dogs in police agencies that protect not only the officers they are partnered with but also the general public. Our goal is as our motto states “Working dogs...Making Our Jobs Safer”.

Currently, law enforcement canines are chosen for their drive, temperament, working ability and physical soundness. The pool of dogs to choose from which meets these criteria is relatively small. Just because a dog is a German Shepherd or a Belgian Malinois does not mean it is suitable for police work. Law enforcement agencies test numerous dogs just to find the “one” which has the attributes we are looking for. AB 1634, with it’s fees and/or penalties will only further limit the already small number of dogs to choose from, by placing financial burdens and constraints on those people dedicated to breeding quality working dogs.

One must also consider the financial impact AB 1634 will have on police agencies and canine handlers across the nation, not to mention the world over. As the pool of potential working dogs grows ever smaller due to AB 1634’s fees

and penalties, this will drive the cost of quality working dog upwards. While a lot of police agencies can budget monies for purchasing working dogs there is a limit to how much they can afford. Please keep in mind not all agencies purchase dogs and there are handlers themselves who have to purchase their own dogs. Right now a quality working dog with no training but high potential, costs upwards of \$5000. Just imagine what that price will increase to when the demand for potentially quality working canines FAR EXCEEDS the supply. There is no doubt numerous canine units throughout the country will be disbanded because their agencies will no longer be able to afford to purchase quality working dogs. As a result, a suspect who probably would have surrendered peacefully due to the presence of a K9, will probably not give up as easily. Officers will now be even more vulnerable in dangerous situations.

AB 1634 includes an exemption for service dogs, i.e. law enforcement canines. However, this exemption is absolutely useless in view of the bill requiring all dogs to be "altered" by 4 (four) months of age. No dog is appropriately trained and actively used by law enforcement agencies at 4 months of age. In fact, four month old puppies are never even considered as "being in training" for law enforcement work. Most law enforcement canines have to be AT LEAST a year old before they will even be evaluated for police work. Neutered/spayed dogs do not have the necessary drive needed for police work. This has been proven time after time. This exemption only protects the CURRENT working ADULT dog.

In the long run AB 1634 will have disastrous, far reaching consequences for not only responsible breeders (we don't mean commercial/puppy mill breeders) but for law enforcement agencies and canine units everywhere. We, the Western States Police Canine Association, strongly opposes AB 1634 and request it be defeated or withdrawn.

Sincerely,

Andrea Contreras
Vice President,
Western States Police Canine Association