

## **Why is CalAnimals Opposed to AB 1881?**

As people committed to the sheltering, care, reunification, and adoption of dogs and cats, we wholeheartedly agree that dogs and cats are deserving of the great care and attention listed in AB 1881. Our opposition extends from the fact that this bill is specifically targeting shelters and adopters and there is really no justification in doing so.

### **A Flawed Premise**

This bill does not solve a problem. The sponsor of this bill thinks that “bad” people are adopting animals from shelters, behaving irresponsibly, and then returning them. There is no data to support this. In fact, overall shelter intakes are down as are adoption returns. What IS happening in many shelters right now, is that adoptions have been slow and animals are staying longer. This is stressful for both shelters and rescue organizations as staff and volunteers struggle to find placement for homeless pets.

The sponsors of this bill allege that our sheltering professionals are not properly counseling or communicating with adopters about the expectations to provide quality care. As a result, the state must step in and provide us with a notice to post in our facilities.

Our shelters are staffed by trained professionals and dedicated volunteers that work each and every day to help animals in need. They work with adopters to help them select the right pet, provide counseling to help ensure a smooth transition to the new home, and provide ongoing support.

When pets are returned to the shelter, it is usually either because the pet is not the right match, or the adopter experiencing some unexpected financial or housing hardship. People should not be shamed for having to make these difficult decisions.

### **Why Shelters?**

Only about 1/3 of people are acquiring pets from shelters. These people are the most kind and compassionate, opening their hearts and homes to a shelter pet, and savvy in that they are getting a pet that is already spayed/neutered, vaccinated, microchipped, and licensed. Why are our adopters the target for this bill? If the general population really needs to be “educated” on proper pet ownership, why is this not required posting for vet offices, pet stores, and other places where people acquire animals?



## California Animal Welfare Association

Promoting Excellence in Animal Care, Sheltering, and Law Enforcement since 1909

On behalf of our adopters and Californians in general, we regret that the legislature has little faith in them.

We respectfully ask our legislative representatives to show compassion to both ends of the leash. We appreciate their concern for animals and ask that they afford compassion, respect, and trust to those people opening their hearts and homes to adoptable dogs and cats.

### **Declarations**

And finally, a note on the declarations in this bill. Shelters have made tremendous progress over the years becoming community resource centers for people and their pets. Shelters offer so much more than traditional housing and placement of animals. We requested removal of the word “euthanize” from the declarations in this bill as we find it immensely frustrating to continue to have shelters characterized as places that animals go to die. This is a grave mischaracterization of the work of modern shelters, and the state of California should proudly recognize our lifesaving progress and broad array of community services offered to pets and their people.

Thank you for taking the time to understand our perspective on this proposed legislation.

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