

Governor Schwarzenegger vetoes AB 241, AB 243, and AB 1122

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Governor Schwarzenegger has vetoed AB 241, AB 243, and AB 1122. All three bills could have criminalized the lawful activities of breeders and pet owners throughout California.

The October 11, vetoes were achieved through the combined efforts of PetPac, California Federation of Dog Clubs, and We the People Pets. In addition, the California Legislature and the Governor's office received thousands of letters, phone calls and faxes from pet lovers across the Nation. PetPac's Bill Hemby and We the People Pets spokesperson Diane Amble attended every hearing of these anti-pet bills and testified against them. The defeat of these bills sends a strong message to animals rights extremists like PETA who want to make criminals out of pet owners.

In his veto message concerning AB 241, Dogs and Cats: Breeders bill, Governor Schwarzenegger wrote, "I am returning Assembly Bill 241 without my signature. This measure would make it a crime for any person or entity to own or control more than 50 un-sterilized adult dogs or cats for breeding or raising for sale as pets. I support measures designed to prevent animal cruelty and that punish persons engaged in the abuse of animals. However, this measure simply goes to far in an attempt to address the serious problem of puppy mills. An arbitrary cap on the number of animals any entity can possess throughout the state will not end unlawful, inhumane breeding practices. Instead this measure has the potential to criminalize the lawful activities of reputable breeders, pet stores, kennels, and charitable organizations engaged in raising service and assistance dogs. For these reasons, I am unable to sign this bill."

In the governor's veto message concerning AB 243, Animal Abuse Penalties, he wrote, "I am returning Assembly Bill 243 without my signature. This bill would require a judge to make an order prohibiting a person convicted of specified animal-related crimes from owning, possessing, or caring for any animals for a minimum period of time. This measure is unnecessary. Judges already have the discretion to enter an order forbidding persons from caring for animals if it's warranted. Making this order mandatory could unjustly impact individuals who make a living working with or caring for animals. Consequently, I am unable to sign this bill."

And in his AB 1122 Sale of Live Animals veto Governor Schwarzenegger wrote, "I am returning Assembly Bill 1122 without my signature. I am concerned with the scope and unintended consequences of this bill and that it does not assure the

humane and ethical treatment and welfare of animals. This bill has unknown costs associated with the enforcement and implementation of prohibiting the sale of live animals in specified venues and could drive the selling of animals underground or to private sites. For this reason I am unable to sign this bill."

Still stalled in the California Assembly is SB 250 the mandatory spay and neuter bill introduced by Senate Majority Leader Dean Florez and supported by PETA. And while HSUS has not come out officially in support or opposition to SB 250, they have been a strong financial supporter of the bill's sponsor the Social Compassion in Legislation (SCIL) and its founder and President Judie Mancuso, and historically HSUS have worked to get MSN ordinances passed in CA.

The push for making this bill law will resume in January 2010. SB 250 will make it illegal to own an intact dog or cat over the age of six-months unless one is granted an intact animal permit. Owners of intact dogs already pay higher fees, sometimes three times the amount of owners of spayed or neutered dogs, to license their animals. In addition, if this bill passes it carries heavy penalties for simple violations such as if an intact dog gets out of a fenced yard and if intact dog owners are cited for having their dogs off leash.

Organizations like PetPac, California Federation of Dog Clubs, We the People Pets and concerned pet owners continue to fight hard for the freedom of breeders and pet owners to decide what is right for their animals. PETA continues to fight hard to take away that freedom by pushing forward legislation that would criminalize pet owners and breeders.