



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo Supports Legislation to Double Fines for Animal Abandonment in New York State

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. March 1, 2016

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Howard Beach, NY (March 1, 2016) In an effort to underscore the serious and often heartbreaking issue of animal abandonment, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. recently joined with his Senate colleagues in approving legislation (S.410) that would double fines for New York residents who walk away from their pets without providing any kind of care for them.

“When you take an animal into your home, you are making a commitment to care for that new family member to the best of your ability for the rest of its life,” said Addabbo. “Or at least that’s how it should be. Unfortunately, many people, for a variety of reasons, simply abandon their animals when they decide they can’t or won’t care for them anymore. This is cruel and contributes significantly to spiraling animal overpopulation and associated problems in many communities.”

Under the bill, the fine for abandoning an animal would rise from \$1,000 to \$2,000, and could also continue to carry a penalty of up to a year in prison. This punishment would apply to owners who abandon and stop providing care for their animals as well as to people who fail to retrieve their injured pet when it is found in a public place and they are notified of its whereabouts.

“It’s a tough call for pet owners when they develop serious allergies or illnesses, are forced to move to a place where animals aren’t allowed, find they can’t afford expensive veterinary care, or otherwise decide they can’t or don’t want to keep Fluffy or Fido as a member of their family,” said Addabbo. “But there are certainly alternatives to dumping pets on the street to fend for themselves, get injured or killed, and possibly give birth to innocent babies who are very often doomed to short and painful lives. I am hopeful that an increase in animal abandonment fines will, at the very least, encourage pet owners to seek out reasonable alternatives before they toss out their animals like yesterday’s trash.”

Nationwide, Addabbo noted, approximately 7.6 million companion animals enter shelters every year – including 3.9 million dogs and 3.4 million cats. About twice as many of these animals entering shelters come in as homeless strays in comparison to the number of pets relinquished by their owners.

“The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) says it is impossible to put a firm number on the number of stray animals in the United States, and reports that one estimate for homeless cats alone reaches 70 million,” said Addabbo. “We need to take action to address animal overpopulation, cruelty and abandonment on a number of different fronts, and increasing penalties for irresponsible owner behavior is one part of the puzzle.”

The legislation, having passed the Senate, is under review by the Assembly Agriculture Committee.