



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

Senate Majority Advances Legislation to Strengthen Animal Protections During National Pet Week

BRIAN KAVANAGH May 5, 2021

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Senate Majority Advances Legislation to Strengthen Animal Protections During National Pet Week

(Albany, NY) Today, in recognition of National Pet Week, the Senate Democratic Majority passed legislation to improve the health and safety of domestic animals, building on the conference's continued advocacy for animal welfare. This package will establish a ban on the

sale of puppy mill animals, better define the crime of aggravated cruelty to animals, enact a property inspection requirement to check for abandoned animals, and ensure the best interest of pets is considered during divorce or separation. This legislation aims to curb animal abuse and mistreatment of animals throughout the state and encourage humane treatment.

“The Senate Majority is dedicated to the humane treatment of all animals,” Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. “As Senate Majority Leader, I have emphasized the importance of animal welfare and how it reflects who we are as a society. This comprehensive package is a necessary step in combating the mistreatment, neglect, and abuse of domestic animals. These bills also promote the proper care and consideration that animals deserve. I commend the bill sponsors, and we will continue to pass common-sense legislation to keep our animal friends out of harm's way.”

The legislation passed by the Senate Majority, includes:

- **Puppy Mill Sales Ban:** This bill, [S.1130](#), sponsored by Senator Micheal Gianaris, prohibits the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits by retail pet shops. Creating a barrier against the puppy mill supply chain and encouraging pet shops to partner with local animal shelters to showcase animals available for adoption.
- **Clarifies Aggravated Cruelty to Animals:** This bill, [S.960](#), sponsored by Senator Liz Krueger, eliminates the word “serious” from the "serious physical injury" language of the crime of aggravated cruelty to animals, to ensure appropriate penalties when a person intends to cause extreme physical pain to an animal, even if the animal makes a full recovery.
- **Abandoned Animal Property Inspections:** This bill, [S.4081A](#), sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey, will require landlords of vacated properties to inspect the property for abandoned animals within three days if they knew or should have known that the

property had been vacated.

- Companion Animal Consideration: This bill, [S.4248](#), sponsored by Senator James Skoufis, will require the best interest of a companion animal to be considered when awarding possession in a divorce.

Bill Sponsor, Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris, said, “With so many good animals in need of rescue, there is no need for puppy mills that abuse animals to supply pet stores. Our four-legged companions should be treated with respect, not like commodities. I thank my colleagues for joining me in passing this important legislation and look forward to working with Assembly Member Rosenthal to get this bill over the finish line.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Michelle Hinchey said, “During National Pet Week, I am proud to join my colleagues in advancing a suite of legislation to improve animal welfare across New York State, including legislation I sponsor to find companion animals abandoned on vacated properties. Animals should not have to suffer because of their owners’ thoughtless actions and my bill ensures that once a tenant or homeowner moves, their residence is inspected within three days of departure so that no animal is left behind. Animal neglect has no place in our society, and I’m glad to do my part to prevent needless suffering and create a safer New York for our companion animals.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Liz Krueger said, “Our society can be judged in part by the way we treat the animals in our care. It's just common sense that if you set out to cause extreme physical pain to an animal, that counts as 'cruelty,' and you should get more than a slap on the wrist. I thank my colleagues for passing this bill today, and standing up for the needs of vulnerable animals.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator James Skoufis said, "For too long, our beloved animal companions have gotten short shrift. I am committed to protecting the rights of our vulnerable furry and feathered friends, and am heartened by the legislature's commitment to consider an animal's best interest during divorce proceedings. The full slate of National Pet Week legislation brings us several steps closer to ensuring the wellbeing of all domesticated animals."

Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. said, "Animals are living beings deserving of compassion, respect, and protection. With so many pets available for adoption, retail stores selling animals from abusive puppy and kitten mills, are becoming obsolete. I am proud to join my colleagues in co-sponsoring legislation to provide a voice for these defenseless animals and ensure abusers will be held accountable with appropriate penalties imposed."

Senator Jamaal Bailey said, "Some of our often forgotten New Yorkers are our domestic animals. We have unfortunately seen the horrific conditions that many of them face at mills, retail spaces, and at times in the home. I am proud to be a part of a conference that prioritizes all New Yorkers including our animals. I would like to thank Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins for her leadership, and my colleagues who sponsored the bills included in this package."

Senator John Brooks said, "This National Pet Week, I am proud to support this legislation that extends long-needed protections to our furry companions. These changes to New York law will tackle crucial issues that have been hurting animals for years. As elected officials, we have a responsibility to protect the well-being of all our constituents- whether they talk, bark, or meow. I look forward to these laws taking effect and to a New York that better protects and defends the well-being of animals."

Senator Jeremy Cooney said, "As someone who grew up with rescue dogs, I support ensuring that we take care of our animal companions' health and well-being. National Pet Week is the

perfect time to take action to protect the animals who depend on us for love and care.”

Senator Pete Harckham said, “As a longtime animal rights advocate and proud owner of two rescue dogs, I applaud the actions of my Senate colleagues in passing this package of legislation that aims to protect pets from harm. There is too much cruelty to animals in our society, none of which should be tolerated, and as part of our basic humanity we must do what we can to stop it.”

Senator Brad Hoylman said, “We must respect the rights and care about the wellbeing of all animals, pets included. I’m proud to support this National Pet Week package of legislation to improve animal welfare in New York and, among other things, ban puppy mills. I’m grateful for Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Deputy Majority Leader Michael Gianaris commitment to improving the treatment of all animals in New York and for Assembly Member Linda J. Rosenthal’s work on animal rights as well.”

Senator Robert Jackson said, “As a pet owner myself, I know how much domestic animals enrich our lives—whether as a companion, confidant, protector, or comedian, they are always there for us. Animals should be treated with compassion. Whether at retail pet shops or in the home, cruelty has no place. It is only fitting that during National Pet Week, we pass legislation that is essential in protecting animal health and welfare while encouraging responsible and humane behavior toward them every day of the year.”

Senator Brian Kavanaugh said, “We have a long way to go to live up to our values and ensure that animals are treated humanely. I’m proud to support the important steps we’re taking today.”

Senator Sean Ryan said, “This package of legislation will protect countless animals from cruelty and neglect. Animal shelters throughout New York face challenges every day finding

homes for the animals in their care. Encouraging pet shops to work with shelters to showcase the pets waiting to be adopted will result in increased adoption numbers, and help provide loving homes to dogs and cats who otherwise may never have found one. We are also taking aggressive action to cut off sales outlets for puppy mills, which will disincentivize the operation of these abusive breeding facilities by making them less profitable.”

Senator James Sanders Jr. said, “Pets are very special. Whether you are a dog person or a cat person, or anywhere in between. These animals enrich our lives with their companionship and support. It is our duty to protect them since they cannot protect themselves and that is why this package of legislation is so important. We must prevent animal cruelty in all of its forms whether it is shutting down puppy mills or clarifying abuse laws. As a dog owner myself, these issues are close to my heart and I look forward to the expeditious passage of this legislation.”

Senator Luis R. Sepúlveda said, “I am proud to support animal-friendly legislation that aims to improve the overall welfare of animals in New York. This legislation will require the inspection of vacated properties to search for abandoned animals, consider what's best for companion animals during divorce proceedings, ban puppy mill sales, and amend aggravated animal cruelty language that will hold assailants accountable. Collectively, these bills will ensure the safety and protection of animals that cannot advocate for themselves.”

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said, “When you see that adorable dog, or purring kitten or cuddly bunny in the pet store window, think twice before purchasing it. Many of these animals were raised in deplorable and abusive conditions. Legislation sponsored by Sen. Michael Gianaris which I co-sponsored, would prohibit their sale in pet stores. These puppy mills raise these pets under terrible conditions so that when the store sells the pet it often has serious underlying health issues.”

Senator Kevin Thomas said “As an animal lover and dog "Dad" myself, I enthusiastically support these bills to protect our beloved pets. No animals should be subjected to cruel or inhumane conditions. I applaud my Senate colleagues for introducing and supporting this important legislation.”

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