



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anthony H. Palumbo

Senator Palumbo Introduces Animal Shelter Support Bill

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NYS Capitol

Legislation Creates New Fund to Help NY's Animal Shelters

New York State Senator Anthony Palumbo (R,C-New Suffolk) has introduced new legislation (S.6733) to create the Animal Offense Assistance Fund to provide needed support to shelters caring for surrendered animals throughout New York State. The fund will be financed through a five-dollar surcharge on court fees and will ensure a recurring stream of revenue to shelters caring for surrendered animals.

“Animal shelters across the state provide care, treatment and lodgings for abused and neglected animals for months, and even years, and should not have to foot the bill for the deplorable actions of others,” said Senator Anthony Palumbo. “The Animal Offense Assistance Fund will provide a consistent funding stream, similar to the Crime Victims Fund, to keep our shelters solvent so they can provide the necessary care, treatment and services desperately needed for abused animals.”

Senator Palumbo noted that when abused animals are rescued through the criminal justice system, the animals are often in need of extensive veterinary care and the costs to nurture them back to health are extremely high. In many cases, the shelter must also maintain the animals as evidence and cannot offer the rehabilitated animal for adoption until the criminal case is resolved, no matter how long it takes to adjudicate the pending case.

In one recent case in Albany County, 102 animals were living in squalor at a home that also doubled as an unregistered rescue. In a combined effort between Humane Law Enforcement from the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society and the Town of Colonie Animal Control, the animals were rescued and 98 of them were placed with Mohawk Hudson. As a result, Mohawk Hudson was required to spend \$303,957.25 for only the first 30 days of care. They sought relief from the Court, spent \$23,550.48 on legal fees and were granted only a \$10,000 bond from the Court.

Additionally, The New York State Animal Protection Federation’s recent survey found that of 47 cases, the cost of care was \$4,426,250. The shelters only received \$795,337 in restitution, which is 18% of the total cost. Sadly, these cases are just the tip of the iceberg and show the immense financial strain our shelters are facing.

“This fund is necessary for the long-term health and sustainability of our animal shelters that provide countless families with their ‘forever’ friends,” said Senator Anthony Palumbo. “New York’s shelters need our support and assistance to ensure that they can continue to their critical mission of protecting and caring for our animals and pets.”