



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## **Addabbo: Think long and hard before giving pets as holiday gifts**

Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.

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While pet ownership is generally a joy for both two-legged humans and their four-legged or feathered companions, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. is urging holiday gift givers to think long and hard before presenting family members or friends with animals as presents.

“We’ve all seen plenty of heartwarming commercials where a fluffy kitten or playful puppy is a highlight of the holiday gift-giving season,” said Addabbo. “But pets of any kind – whether cats, dogs, birds, iguanas, snakes, or any other kind of companion animal – are a true responsibility. Before giving an animal as a gift, it’s vital to find out whether the recipient actually wants a pet and has adequate resources to provide it with proper care.”

Addabbo stressed that owning a pet is a long-term commitment, and that giving an unexpected or unwanted animal for a present can lead to great heartbreak for both the recipient and the animal itself. To prevent such unhappy circumstances, Addabbo suggests:

-- When considering whether to buy a pet for someone, first make certain the person actually wants one. If you are not confident that someone wants a pet as a gift, the best thing to do is ask. Find out what type of pet they would like and what type of pet they can handle.

-- Be sure potential recipients can handle the varied costs and responsibilities associated with a new pet. There will be veterinarian bills, food costs, grooming, walks, the need for accessories and toys, and much more. If the person appears unable to shoulder these costs and responsibilities, or may not have adequate time to dedicate to the animal, it may be best to consider a different gift.

"In the end, surprising someone with a pet can be a very bad idea," Addabbo said. "Taking in a pet means taking in a new family member, and it is a commitment that can last for many years. The new pet owner must be ready and able to accept that responsibility." Depending on the animal and its needs, annual costs may be upwards of \$1,000 a year.

Addabbo pointed out that the ASPCA's official position on giving pets as gifts states that they should only be given to those who have expressed interest in owning one, and who have the ability to care for it adequately and responsibly.

"If you do decide to get someone on your list the pet they have always wanted, make sure to get the animals from shelters and responsible breeders," Addabbo said. "There are many wonderful and reputable animal shelters and rescue organizations right here in Queens where the perfect pet can be adopted, and they are also always in need of volunteers and donations – another great avenue for improving the lives of animals this holiday season."