



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo: Think before you decide to purchase a pet as a holiday gift this year

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. December 6, 2022

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As the holiday season approaches and people are thinking of what types of presents to get for their loved ones, State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. wants people to know the significance of buying a pet as a gift for their family members or friends.

“We have all seen the heartwarming commercials where a kitten or dog is the big, surprise holiday gift. While I really like the idea of an appropriate pet as a present, the gifted animal can come with unexpected care, procedures and costs,” Addabbo explained. “Any pet — whether a cat, dog, bird, fish, or reptile — are a true responsibility, so it is vital to find out if the recipient actually wants a pet and has the adequate resources to provide it with the care it needs.”

Owning a pet is a long-term commitment, and 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. Depending on the animal and its needs, annual costs may be upwards of \$1,000 a year. 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.

“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.”

Addabbo also 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 added. “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.”