

# Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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## **Senator Helming Supports Bills to Protect Animals and Owners From Harm**

GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that the New York State Senate recently passed a package of measures that strengthen protections for animals and their owners. Specifically, Senator Helming co-sponsors three bills that would consider harm to companion animals while committing a felony as aggravated cruelty to animals; allow municipalities to waive licensing fees for active duty military members’ dogs when the service members are deployed; and create K9 Veterans Day. These three bills passed unanimously, and they will now be sent to the Assembly for consideration.

“I am an animal lover and a strong supporter of animal protections and helping pets and their owners. That is why I am proud to join my State Senate colleagues to pass this package of legislation aimed at keeping our pets and owners safe and holding accountable those who harm and abuse them. It should be noted that many of these bills passed with wide bipartisan support, meaning that animal advocacy is not a political issue but a commonsense one. I am particularly proud to support Kirby & Quigley’s Law, which would strengthen penalties for those who harm and kill animals while committing a felony by adding companion animals to the criminal charges. I am also proud to support our service members – humans and dogs alike – by ensuring our active military members do not face the burden of licensing fees when they are deployed and by creating K9 Veterans Day to honor the many dogs who have served our country and our communities in several ways,” Senator Helming said.

Senator Helming co-sponsors Kirby & Quigley’s Law (S.1680A), which would expand the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to companion animals while committing a felony. This violation would be punishable with a sentence of two years in jail and a \$5,000 fine.

The bill is named after a family’s two beloved Goldendoodle dogs, who were shot to death by burglars who had broken into the family’s home. Although the current definition of aggravated cruelty to animals would most likely apply to the actions in this case, the potential harm to other innocent animals misused, harmed, or killed in the act of a felony cannot be ignored. Drug traffickers, arsonists, and burglars often perpetrate horrendous acts of violence to human victims not only by destroying or stealing property but also by harming or killing their beloved animals.

Senator Helming also co-sponsors a measure (S.839) that would allow municipalities to waive a licensing fee for an active military member's dog when the owner is deployed. The dog would already be licensed in the municipality where the owner lives, but often when service members are deployed, they place their dogs with friends or family members who may live in different communities. Current law requires the temporary owner to register the dog and pay another licensing fee, even though he or she will not permanently care for the animal. Although the fee is not significant, service members with dogs should not have the added burden of worrying about additional licensing fees when they are serving our country.

She also co-sponsors legislation (S.216) that would designate March 13 of every year as K9 Veterans Day. This date coincides with the official creation of the K9 Corps on March 13, 1942. This day would pay tribute to the thousands of dogs who have served with honor, dignity, and valor throughout our nation's history. It would recognize Customs dogs, Border Patrol dogs, Secret Service dogs, search and rescue dogs, police dogs, and many more in addition to military working dogs who have served from World War I to present conflicts and continue to serve on our borders and abroad, on land and at sea. Like humans, many have made the ultimate sacrifice.

*Senator Helming represents the 54<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, please visit Senator Helming's [website](#), or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook or Twitter.*

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