



COLORADO PET
ASSOCIATION

OPPOSE SB 201

'Designate Shelter Dogs and Cats as State Pets' *Unfairly singles out where a pet is acquired*

- SB 201 Designates that only dogs and cats who were acquired as pets at shelter or rescue facilities may be considered a "State Pet" ***What about all the other pets in Colorado? People don't just have dogs and cats as pets.***
- SB 201 unfairly leaves out dogs and cats that do not come from shelters and rescues. ***What does that say to people who may want to purchase from a pet store or breeder? That somehow, their pet is less important to Colorado?***
- SB 201 does not recognize the importance of service dogs in the lives of Coloradans, nor does it recognize the responsible pet owner who did not abandon their dog at a shelter.
- SB 201 is discriminatory in that it recognizes HOW a person obtains his or her pet. ***Why elevate one form of acquiring a pet over another?***
- ***SB201 PROMOTES OUT OF STATE ANIMALS AS THE 'STATE PET'! According to the Colorado Dept. Of Agriculture, over 14,000 dogs were imported into Colorado for adoption in shelters. Why would the State of Colorado recognize these imports as the 'State Pet'?***

OPPOSE SB201

**IT WAS WRONG FOR NEW YORK
IT'S WRONG FOR COLORADO**

Let's Make Shelter Pets a Memory, not a Mascot

Colorado's lawmakers will soon consider Senate Bill 13-201, a well-intentioned piece of legislation aimed at making Colorado's shelter animals the state's pet symbol. Raising public awareness of shelter pets is a laudable goal, but using the state symbol is the wrong vehicle for achieving it.

State symbols should not be political statements that are likely to divide people into factions; they should represent widely admired, commonly recognized emblems associated with the state that celebrate resources, natural beauty, industry, or regional history and bring people together. Citizens treasure state emblems such as animals, plants, sports or rocks because they are native to the area and instill a sense of pride in their local identity. Thus, Colorado's animal symbol is the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep, and the state sports are snowboarding and snow skiing. A few states recognize a "state dog," but those that do give the honor to a breed special to their citizens. For example, Virginia's state dog is the American Foxhound, a tribute to George Washington, while Massachusetts' dog is the home-grown Boston Terrier.

Shelter pets, on the other hand, are ubiquitous. They exist in all states and have no specific Colorado identity. Moreover, shelter pets do not represent a particular type of pet, but *a particular source* of pets. And in Colorado, a large number of shelter dogs are not even native to the state but imported from other states (and in some cases from other countries), to fill the state's demand for dogs.

Over the course of the last decade, dog overpopulation ended in many parts of the US, causing some shelters to abandon their traditional mission of providing refuge and placement of local pets to the importation of dogs to meet the demand of the pet marketplace. Colorado has been a leader in this trend: according to the Colorado Department of Agriculture records, the state's shelters and rescues imported more than 13,000 dogs for adoption during 2011 alone, displacing local Colorado sources, including native shelter dogs. SB13-201 would not only elevate, but endorse and codify this highly questionable practice.

Broad-scale, unregulated pet importation poses potential public health risks from disease and parasites, monopolizes the marketplace, represents a largely unregulated and underground economy, and is national in scope and growing. A 2006 CDC report estimated that 199,000 dogs entered the US from Mexico that

year alone, and there is mounting evidence that the practice has expanded significantly since then.

But that's not all. The seal of approval provided by SB 13-201 will not only endorse importation of pets from other states, territories, and nations into Colorado, it will also provide a "high five" for a plan that replaces a sound, well-developed pet selection process and with an unrestrained marketing plan for shelter dog adoption.

Experts know that successful pet relationships require both emotion and reason. The best matches occur when acquisition is preceded by careful research of species and individual animal traits; and when individuals have realistic expectations of animal behavior, training, and care. Behaviorists, trainers, veterinarians, and animal breeders have filled books, magazines, newspaper columns, and electronic media with advice, hints, and details to help families choose a pet that meets their emotional and lifestyle needs. Those who downplay this compendium of knowledge and seek to replace it with emotional marketing appeals elevating shelter dogs above all other sources mislead consumers – no matter how well-meaning they might be.

Thoughtful pet selection enriches the breadth and depth of the human-animal bond. Potential pet owners who choose a puppy or adult dog that is healthy, trainable (or already trained), and capable of fitting the family dynamic are more likely to develop an enduring and rewarding relationship than those who make snap decisions based on an emotional appeal. Indeed, numerous studies have shown that dogs adopted from shelters are at risk of being relinquished yet again when their behavior problems are not resolved.

There are good reasons to get a dog from a shelter. And there's no doubt that many shelters do an admirable job of placing unwanted dogs and cats into new homes. But the bottom line is that no one source for pets is best for everyone. Colorado lawmakers should not signify that there is by making one source the state symbol. Celebrate the people involved in animal rescue and shelter work who dedicate their lives to saving lives, who come up with innovative ideas to find permanent homes for animals. Celebrate responsible pet owners. But don't turn a social problem into a celebration. We should be working to make shelter pets a memory, not a mascot.

Patti Strand, National Director, National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA)

STATE OF NEW YORK

6681

2011-2012 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

March 24, 2011

Introduced by M. of A. KELLNER -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental Operations

AN ACT to amend the state law, in relation to designating rescue dogs as the official state dog

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Legislative intent. Throughout history,
art and literature
2 have depicted humans in all walks of life and social
strata with dogs,
3 illustrating their widespread acceptance in everyday
life. Some reli-
4 gions even incorporated them into their worship.
Indeed, dogs have long
5 been admired for the purity of their character traits,
with military
6 annals documenting the wartime bravery and courage of
dogs in the K-9
7 Corps.
8 Closer to home, our own culture is populated with
examples of the
9 well-established place dogs have found in our hearts
and homes. People

10 of all ages, but particularly the elderly and the
young, enjoy their
11 companionship. For single people, dogs offer a welcome
relief from lone-
12 liness. For children, an animal in the home
contributes warmth and
13 unconditional love, and teaches responsibility and
consideration for the
14 needs of another creature. Those who suffer from disease
or injury expe-
15 rience a therapeutic, even spiritual, benefit from their
presence.
16 Dogs do so much good for the community: they give us a
sense of opti-
17 mism, safeguard us from depression and loneliness,
and break down the
18 barriers that isolate us from one another. Their
presence improves our
19 health, protects us from danger, and teaches us about
caring and respon-
20 sibility. And they ask for so little in return.
21 Sadly, as many as 4 million dogs enter animal
shelters in the United
22 States each year. Over 90 percent of these dogs are
savable. Most of
23 them are simply victims of circumstance, ending up in a
shelter through
24 no fault of their own: a person moves, a couple
divorces, a job is lost,

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new;
matter in brackets

[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD09997-02-1

A. 6681

2

1 someone gets ill or dies. Most of the dogs are
healthy, well-behaved,
2 and even housetrained.
3 Unfortunately, some people perceive rescue
animals as "damaged,"

4 concerned that the reason they are in the shelter is
because something
5 is wrong with them. Nothing could be further from the
truth. But because
6 of that perception, some people choose not to adopt.
Tragically, roughly
7 half of all dogs in shelters are killed.
8 The deaths of these innocent animals can be
prevented through
9 adoption. Shelter and rescue animals are eager to become
beloved members
10 of a family, unconditionally loving and loyal pets,
grateful for a
11 second chance.
12 While some with special needs might need a little
extra TLC, they can
13 become members of loving homes, as many of the dogs
saved from the
14 horrific dog fighting operation in the Michael Vick case
have proven.
15 Adopting an animal from a shelter or rescue group
eases the burden on
16 the shelter or rescue group, enabling it to continue to
serve the commu-
17 nity by taking in other unwanted or needy animals.
Generally, dogs
18 adopted from shelters or rescue groups are neutered
or spayed, thus
19 reducing the number of homeless dogs in the state.
20 There are many benefits to adopting an animal from a
shelter, ranging
21 from the ownership support services that most shelters
and rescues offer
22 to the ability to adopt a dog that is already trained
and housetrained.
23 Many animal shelters and rescue organizations provide
new owners with an
24 array of material concerning their new pet's
personality, temperament,
25 habits and other general qualities, and relating to
training, common
26 behavior problems, feeding, general care and more. In
addition, there is
27 the satisfaction of knowing that through adoption, a
life has been
28 saved.

29 As with the designation of other state symbols,
such as the state

30 flower or state tree, designating the rescue dog as
official state dog

31 will serve an important educational function. The
state will promote

32 humane education, providing opportunities for children
in particular to

33 learn about adopting rescued animals, as well as about
the importance of

34 measures such as spaying and neutering pets, providing
them with micro-

35 chip identification implants, and providing responsive
pet care-all of

36 which have been proven to reduce the number of animals
arriving in shel-

37 ters.

38 The legislature hereby finds and declares it
necessary and in good

39 policy of the state to promote and encourage the
adoption of animals

40 from animal shelters and animal rescue organizations
and to recognize

41 the services these entities provide.

42 § 2. The state law is amended by adding a new section
84-a to read as

43 follows:

44 § 84-a. State dog. The rescue dog shall be the
official dog of the

45 state of New York. As used in this section "rescue dog"
means a dog of

46 any breed or mixture of breeds rescued and adopted from
an animal shel-

47 ter or rescue group located in the state.

48 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Appendix 2- Shelter/Rescue Intake 2011 License Year

	Beginning Inventory	Stray	Owner Surrender	Confiscated	Transferred from In State	Transferred from out of state	Other	Total Intake
Dogs	5549	46267	24696	3989	8838	13526	3650	103298
Cats	4044	33331	21693	943	5424	1891	3209	660836
Small Mammals	685	1511	2876	102	454	61	255	5492
Reptiles	239	190	254	51	62	1	8	787
Pet Birds	747	285	358	71	48	3	9	774



Published on *petMD* (<http://www.petmd.com>)

The Invisible Threat: How Pet Imports Are Undermining Animal Health and Welfare

Submitted by Dr. Patty Khuly on Mon, 04/04/2011 - 08:00

Over the past ten years the business of overseas pet importation has seen some pretty impressive growth. Which is a very, very bad thing. That is, if you care at all about animal welfare and public health.

According to a March 1st article in *DVM Newsmagazine* online,

At last count, in 2006, 287,000 dogs crossed the United States' borders, and veterinary officials fear the problem is getting worse.

Consumer demand for pure-bred and cross-bred puppies coupled with strict new domestic breeding laws is believed to be driving importation numbers even higher than four years ago. To exacerbate the problem, federal regulators have no real way of tracking exactly how many dogs are brought in the country, where they come from, where they are going and whether importers are following up on vaccination requirements for underage puppies.

So it is that our domestic successes have translated — yet again — into (a) worse conditions for others elsewhere (Latin American and Eastern European puppy mills cannot be a nice place to come from if the health of the imports I've seen is any guide); and (b) a huge potential health hazard — to humans, I mean.

It's this latter point that's usually glossed over, but not in this article, where CDC researchers are looking hard for a solution on the basis of the importation of serious zoonotic diseases along with these puppies:

Based on import trends suggesting that the annual number of unvaccinated puppies

being imported into the United States increased substantially from 2001 to 2006, imported dogs pose a risk for introducing zoonotic pathogens such as rabies into the United States...

But it's not just rabies. There are other scary bugs out there, too, bugs that haven't seen our soils for decades due to better health screening of more traditional agricultural species (like hogs and beef cattle). The dog as ag species is still novel enough that we can't even properly track their numbers at our borders:

No definitive data is available on the number of dogs and puppies imported to the United States each year since no single agency is required to keep track of those numbers. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) monitors only commercial breeders who sell animals through pet stores, brokers and research facilities. The CDC monitors rabies vaccinations in imported pets, but its regulations neither require a health screen for dogs prior to arrival to the United States, nor an evaluation for specific zoonoses of concern. Enforcement of regulations are "problematic, because there is no federal requirement mechanism, or capacity for documenting compliance," according to a 2008 article in the journal *Zoonosis and Public Health* by Marano and fellow CDC veterinarian G. Gale Galland, DVM.

Plus, CDC can't man all the nation's ports of entry, leaving Customs and Border Protection, whose officers have no veterinary training, as the first line of defense to ensure all imported animals meet federal agency requirements.

Scary, right? The fact that there is a huge loophole in our war on animal welfare is one thing, the yawning gap in our nation's biological defenses is quite another.

To be sure, it's already a big problem where I live. In South Florida, I guesstimate that over 50 percent of the French bulldog and French bulldog crosses (yes, these are popular here, too) are imported from Eastern Europe, where it must cost next to nothing to C-section a bitch.

How do I know? These pups are arriving as four- to six-weekers, I've been informed (and I've seen some terribly young ones, too), which is partly why morbidity and mortality rates in these pups in the days immediately post-arrival are sky-high.

Federal regulators, who are so new to the problem that they lack the capacity to handle this burgeoning new breed of animal import may be asking, *but what are we to do?*

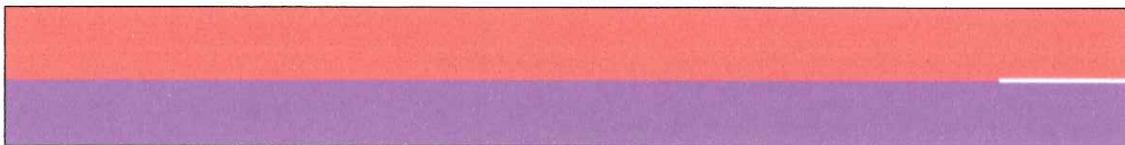
Well, for starters, I suggest we consider treating these dogs like any kind of agricultural import. But then, that's just a veterinarian's opinion. And what do we know? Animal welfare and public health are obviously someone else's purview when it comes to commerce.

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Dog imports raise fears of a resurgence of disease

Posted 10/21/2007 11:26 PM | Comment | Recommend



Enlarge By Josh T. Reynolds for USA TODAY

Anna Geraghty, left, and Marianna Massa tow through Logan International Airport in Boston a cart of dogs from Puerto Rico.

By Alan Gomez, USA TODAY

When animal shelters started going overseas to fill their emptying kennels, some worried the imported strays would bring foreign diseases and even rabies into the USA.

And now for the first time in decades, it has, prompting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to step in.

"The No. 1 thing we think about is canine rabies," said Nina Marano, head of a CDC unit responsible for drafting new regulations for dog importation.

Marano hopes to come up with ways to better screen incoming dogs and have new regulations in place by next

year. Among the recent examples of cases:

- In March, a dog from India flew through Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and reached its owner in Alaska before it was diagnosed with rabies, the CDC said.
- In November 2004, a dog imported from Mexico was the first case of canine rabies in Los Angeles in more than 30 years, the county Animal Care and Control said.
- In May 2004, a dog from Puerto Rico was taken to a Massachusetts shelter to be adopted but was diagnosed with rabies, the first such case in "decades" according to the state Department of Health.

No humans were infected, but critics say it's only a matter of time before a human, or a large number of dogs, are infected if the emerging practice of importing dogs isn't regulated or stopped.

"It's a ticking time bomb," said Patti Strand, president of the National Animal Interest Alliance, a group that represents breeders, pet shop owners and others interested in animal welfare. "We've spent fortunes and decades eradicating many of these diseases, and they may be reintroduced."

Agencies in Southern California created the Border Puppy Task Force after they saw a surprising number of very young dogs being brought across the border from Mexico. The task force estimated that during a one-year span, 10,000 puppies entered San Diego County. The collection of law enforcement and animal welfare agencies has targeted "puppy peddlers" and their sometimes dangerous importing and selling practices.

The only federal requirements for bringing a dog into the USA deal with rabies. An owner must show proof of a rabies vaccination, or sign an agreement stating the dog will be confined until a vaccination is given and goes into effect. Many states have stricter requirements.

The Department of Agriculture closely monitors dealers who sell to pet stores, whether the dogs are raised or imported from other countries. Department spokesperson Jessica Milteer says her agency has no authority to monitor people who import large numbers of dogs and sell them on their own.

That gap is what concerns many in the dog industry.

Marshall Meyers, executive vice president of the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, said those sellers use the Internet, newspaper classifieds and street corners to sell the unregulated dogs. Meyers said those sales make up a vast majority of the international dog trade.

Shelter owners say the importation programs are safe, moral and in demand.

Marianna Massa travels to Puerto Rico several times a year to screen dogs for the Northeast Animal Shelter

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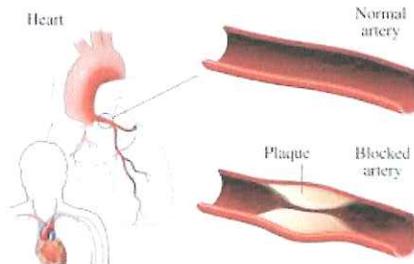
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in Salem, Mass. She said it would be difficult to argue against the program if people saw how strays live in Puerto Rico.

"Along the highway, you see dead dogs like we see squirrels," Massa said. "People just hit them. They don't care."

Some, like Strand, say it's silly and dangerous to go overseas for dogs when there's plenty of strays here. About 4 million dogs are put to death by injection or gas every year in the USA.

"Pet overpopulation is a misnomer," she says. "What we have is a pet distribution problem."

Spay and neutering campaigns have been so successful in much of the USA — especially the Northeast and Northwest — that shelters need to look elsewhere if they want dogs to offer for adoption. But Strand says there is abundance of dogs in other parts of the country such as the South that could make up the difference.

Julie Potter, director of Northeast Animal Shelter, said they take in 800 dogs a year from the South. She said people usually want to adopt younger dogs, so they bring 200 dogs a year from Puerto Rico.

"If it's something we can do to help, why not?" Massa said.

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