



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

Senate Holds Annual Animal Advocacy Day Event and Passes Legislation to Protect Animals

MARTIN J. GOLDEN June 3, 2015

The New York State Senate today passed legislation to further protect animals and people from harm and cruelty as part of the Legislature's annual Animal Advocacy Day. The event brings together lawmakers, law enforcement, and hundreds of pet owners and advocates to raise awareness of important animal issues.

Senator Phil Boyle (R-C-I, Suffolk County), Senate co-sponsor of Animal Advocacy Day, said "Animal Advocacy Day is an important annual event for the Legislature to come together to be a voice for our furry and feathered friends. I'm so pleased to join with Assemblyman Jim Tedisco, Senator Sue Serino, and hundreds of advocates as we send a message to protect all animals in New York."

Senator Sue Serino (R-C-I, Hyde Park), Senate co-sponsor of Animal Advocacy Day, said, "Like many New Yorkers, I consider my animals, Buddy and Ace, an extension of my family. Their health and safety – and the wellness of animals across New York – are a high priority for me and I am proud to be co-sponsoring an event that gives them a real voice and raises awareness for the issues that impact their lives each and every day."

Senate Majority Leader and Coalition Co-Leader John Flanagan (R-C-I, East Northport) said, "The Legislature's annual Animal Advocacy Day is significant because it gives my colleagues

and I the opportunity to show the public that the protection of animal welfare is an important issue. The bills we passed today help keep our pets, service animals, and other companion animals safer and recognize their roles as members of our families and contributors to our communities.”

Senate Coalition Co-Leader Jeffrey D. Klein (D, Bronx) said, “It’s our responsibility as legislators to care for animals who don’t have a voice and hold accountable those who do egregious harm to beloved pets. I’m proud that the New York State Senate passed bills today to ensure the safety of animals in our state. I’m equally pleased that the Senate granted a free day of admission to the Bronx Zoo, so that visitors from across the state can learn about the wonderful work of the Wildlife Conservation Society.”

The bills passed today include:

- S4641 sponsored by Senator Patricia Ritchie (R-C, Heuvelton) would increase the potential jail time, from two years to four, when acts of cruelty against animals are committed in front of children. Minors who are forced to witness harmful acts against animals may endure psychological and emotional distress – and there’s the potential risk that a child’s sense of judgment and ethical conduct could be damaged in the process;
- S410 sponsored by Senator Carl Marcellino (R, Syosset) would increase the maximum fine for the misdemeanor of abandonment of animals from \$1,000 to \$2,000;
- S423 also sponsored by Senator Marcellino would make the theft of a pet a crime of grand larceny in the fourth degree – a class E felony;
- S2102 sponsored by Senator Kenneth LaValle (R-C-I, Port Jefferson) would increase the penalties for leaving a companion animal in a vehicle during times of extreme hot or cold temperatures. This legislation increases the penalties to \$250-\$500 for the first offense and to

\$500-\$1,000 for second and subsequent offenses. It also permits police officers to remove animals from vehicles when they face serious physical injury or death;

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, during warmer months, in just 10 minutes, the temperature inside a vehicle can rise about 20 degrees higher than the outside temperature. In 20 minutes, it can rise to 30 degrees, and at 60 minutes, the temperature inside a car can be more than 40 degrees hotter than the outside temperature. Animals can sustain brain damage or even die from heat stroke in as little as 15 minutes. During times of cold weather, being trapped in a vehicle can potentially cause an animal to freeze to death;

- S3850 sponsored by Senator Andrew Lanza (R-C-I, Staten Island) would allow domestic companion animals to board any public transportation or public transportation service in the event of a state of emergency and evacuation. The New York State Pet Evacuation Transportation and Sheltering Act of 2006 (PETS ACT) requires New York's disaster preparedness plan to include programs to assist household pets and service animals in the event of a disaster. This legislation would coincide with recently-enacted New Jersey law (Chapter 265 of 2013) to provide the same protections to residents of both states;

- S98: The 'Research Animal Retirement Act' sponsored by Senator Boyle would require dogs and cats that have worked in higher education research facilities or facilities that provide research in collaboration with a higher education institutions to be offered for placement with non-profit animal rescues and shelter organizations prior to euthanization;

- S3826 sponsored by Senator Kathleen Marchione (R-C, Halfmoon) would establish March 13 as "K9 Veterans Day." The official K9 Corps was created on March 13, 1942. K9 dogs have served many jobs in all of this nation's wars, having been employed by the U.S. Military from World War I to present conflicts;

- S4119A sponsored by Senator Jeffrey Klein (D, Bronx) would extend the expiration date of the one day free admission policy for the Bronx Zoo, set to expire on July 1, 2015, for five years to July 1, 2020. This bill would allow the Bronx Zoo to reserve at least one day per week as a free admission day to the general public.

- S4990 sponsored by Senator David Valesky (D, Oneida) would allow paramedics to transport injured law enforcement canines to the nearest animal hospital or veterinary clinic when they are injured in the line of duty. Under current law, paramedics may face severe penalties if they care for an injured police dog whose police handler is unharmed. This bill would authorize the care these service dogs need in the event of life-threatening injury; and

- S4265 sponsored by Senator Liz Krueger (D, Manhattan) would remove the term “serious” from the “serious physical injury” language in the felony animal cruelty statute. This measure would close a legal loophole to ensure that perpetrators cannot be given a lesser punishment because the severity of the animal’s injury is not up for interpretation.

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.