



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Carl L. Marcellino

## Senator Marcellino's Bill to Ban the Practice of 'Pet Leasing' Passes Senate

CARL L. MARCELLINO June 6, 2018



Senator Carl L. Marcellino today announced that his legislation which would prohibit the leasing of dogs and cats for ownership has passed the Senate . Pet sellers in New York State have been leasing pets for years; however the sponsors of this legislation doubt if this practice is ethical and humane.

According to a report by the ASPCA, pet sellers allow a consumer to make monthly payments and require consumers to buy out their leases at the end in order to keep their

pets. Almost all puppies sold in pet shops were born in deplorable, inhumane puppy mills, but with price tags between \$1,000 and \$5,000, each pup represents a big payday to the retailers who traffic in this cruelty.

But it's not only the dogs who are victimized. Pet sellers are teaming up with private lenders to offer love-struck shoppers, who might balk at the high cost of their dream puppy, the option to make low monthly payments over a fixed period. In the small print, however, these agreements pad the initial price with fees and a big balloon payment at the end of the term, costing the unwitting buyer double or sometimes triple the original cost of the pup.

Even worse: the purchaser almost never realizes that they do not actually own the pet until the final payments are made years down the line. This practice not only deceives the consumer, it uproots the pet from their family and places him or her in danger of being relinquished to an already overburdened and overcrowded shelter in the event of a missed payment.

"Pets are a vital part of the family for many people across our state. Bringing a dog or cat home is both memorable and exciting. At that moment of purchase, the focus is on the animal, not the fine print in the contract. Imagine the bewilderment of some customers when they find out months later they do not actually own their new pet, but instead, are locked into a rent-to-own scheme. This bill will protect both consumers and pets from this kind of shady operation," said Senator Marcellino.

"Our pets are our family. We wouldn't lease our children or grandparents—why would we lease our pets," said Libby Post, Executive Director of the New York State Animal Protection Federation. "Plain and simple, this comes down to greed and the ability to prey on vulnerable people who are looking for a dog or a cat at a pet store. We would ask folks to come to shelters—we don't have any predatory lending, just reasonable adoption fees for dogs and

cats that are looking for their forever homes.”

The bill is carried in the Assembly by Assemblyman Titone.