



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

## Senate Deputy Leader Gianaris, Assembly Members Rosenthal And Glick Announce Governor Hochul Signs Their Animal Rights Laws

MICHAEL GIANARIS October 31, 2021

| ISSUE: **BREED INSURANCE, VET REPORTING, ANIMAL WELFARE, PETS, DOMESTIC ANIMAL WELFARE**



NEW YORK – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris, Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal, and Assembly Member Deborah Glick announced Governor Kathy Hochul signed into law their legislation which bans homeowner’s insurance companies from charging higher premiums based on the breed of animal living in the house and mandating veterinarians report suspected cases of animal abuse.

“These new laws ensure our animals are treated with the dignity they deserve. Our four-legged friends are valued companions who are parts of our families and deserve to be respected,” said **Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris**. “We have more work to do but these are important steps forward in the cause of animal rights.”

“Violence against animals is often predictive of violence against people, particularly domestic violence, and it is vital that we do everything we can to root out both. Veterinarians have been on the front lines in identifying animal abuse, and with this new law, they will finally have the tools they need to stop abuse,” said **Assembly Member Linda B. Rosenthal**, sponsor of the vet reporting legislation.

“In her later years, my mother had a fearsome looking German Shepard as her companion. We were happy people would think twice when my mother was alone. She was the sweetest and most gentle dog, and my sisters and I called her our sister Ginger. Dogs are not only cherished members of our families; they are also protectors and deterrents against criminals. Yet on the basis of debunked claims and sensational media coverage, the insurance industry has been discriminating against dog owners based solely upon the breed of their companion. Under this new law, no New Yorker will be required by their insurance company to choose between their dog and their home. I thank Senator Gianaris for carrying this bill in the Senate, and for Governor Hochul’s compassionate leadership in signing this important measure into law,” said **Assembly Member Deborah Glick**, sponsor of the breed insurance legislation.

**Background on Breed Insurance ([S.4254/A.4075](#)):** Currently, many providers of homeowners’ insurance will either not insure or charge higher rates for people who have certain breeds of dogs in their homes. New York has long prohibited the enactment of state and local laws regulating dog ownership based on the breed of dog owned, acknowledging the broad consensus that breed restrictions are an ineffective and inaccurate means of preventing dog-related risks and relying instead on objective facts in determining if individual dogs pose public risks. Unfortunately, this longtime prohibition does not forbid breed restrictions in homeowner’s insurance policies, which in many cases, create a de facto dog ban for families since homeowner’s insurance is required for any home mortgage. There is no statistical correlation between dog breeds and bite incidents. Dog behavior is more a function of training than breeding.

**Background on Vet Reporting ([S.5023-A/A.5823-A](#)):** Animal abuse cases can often go unaddressed because they are not brought to the attention of authorities. While veterinarians are currently allowed to report suspected cases of animal abuse to the police, this new law would

require such cases to be reported, if they reasonably and in good faith suspect a companion animal's injury, illness, or condition is the result of cruelty.

The new laws are being lauded by animal advocates:

**Libby Post, Executive Director of the New York State Animal Protection Federation** said, “The actions taken today by Governor Hochul further protect companion animals in New York State. Senator Gianaris’ foresight in sponsoring both of these bills underscores his commitment to animal welfare. It is essential for veterinarians to report animal abuse if we are to stem the tide of animal crimes in New York State. S.5023A/S.5823-A is testament to working together with Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal who shepherded the bill in her chamber. The insurance discrimination bill, which has been championed for a number of years by Assembly Member Deborah Glick, was finally able to pass the State Senate because of the Senator’s leadership and that of Insurance Committee chair Neil Breslin. Now homeowners can rest easy—they will no longer be forced to choose between their beloved family pets or having their homes insured. Enacting both of these bills continues New York State’s efforts to make the state a safer place for companion animals.”

**Bill Ketzner, Senior Director of State Legislation for the ASPCA, Eastern Division** said, “We are so grateful to Senator Gianaris for his leadership on animal welfare issues in the senate, and his longtime commitment to protecting our state’s most vulnerable populations with these forward-thinking efforts. We are especially grateful for the senator’s work to prohibit insurance companies from overcharging or denying families coverage simply because they own a specific breed of dog, during a time of unprecedented housing challenges for New Yorkers, the cost and availability of insurance has become an even more onerous barrier to homeownership for families with pets. Removing this arbitrary and discriminatory impediment for thousands of responsible New York dog owners is simply the right thing to do.”

**Brian Shapiro, New York state director for the Humane Society of the United States** said, “The landmark animal protection bills signed today by Governor Hochul will protect both consumers and animals, and help create a more humane society here in New York. The HSUS applauds Governor Hochul, State Senator Michael Gianaris, Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal and Assemblymember Deborah Glick for championing this meaningful legislation.”

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2021-S4254

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Prohibits insurers from refusing to issue or renew, cancel, or charge or impose an increased premium for certain policies based solely on the breed of dog owned

February 03, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Michael Gianaris**

Do you support this bill?

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## 2021-S5023A

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Requires veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty

February 22, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Michael Gianaris**

Do you support this bill?