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Southern California Bouvier des Flandres Club
Established in Los Angeles County 1972
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Riverside, CA 92506

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Pending Pet Sterilization Legislation before the Council

Dear L.A. Councilmen and Women:

I am writing on behalf of our membership of dog breeders, fanciers and pet owners to urge you to re-evaluate your legislation regarding castration/hysterectomy at four months.

Most of our members are not just average dog owners; we do sterilize where and when appropriate. This aspect of dog/cat ownership should not be legislated out of our hands by well meaning councilmen. The legislation needlessly and recklessly interferes with the traditional relationship between California-licensed veterinarians and their animal patients' owners. The decision to perform surgery on one's pet should not be taken over by government. In addition, this bill establishes an arbitrary age of four months as the standard for mandatory castration and hysterectomy. The proper age for this procedure is a matter of serious debate in the animal care community, with well-documented medical and behavioral problems that can develop from neutering pets too early.

The assumption that drives mandatory sterilization is that pets end up in animal shelters solely because of overpopulation and that mandatory sterilization laws will therefore solve the problem. Proponents of similar bills ignore the fact that most of the animals in shelters today:

- are not young puppies;
- that a high number of kittens are from feral cats;
- that according to the *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, studies conducted by the National Council on Pet Population Studies and Policy and other organizations, about a third of shelter animals were given up by their owners because of personal issues such as moving, financial strain, or because the pet had a behavior or health problem;
- that many pet owners use shelters as an alternative to a veterinarian when seeking euthanasia of an old, sick or dangerous animal;
- that many shelter animals are already neutered – your own numbers show about 80% or more; and
- that the number of animals entering California shelters has been steadily declining for decades with some of the steepest drops occurring in areas with the least coercive laws.

Respectfully,

Judy Kasper, President SCBDFC

"A government big enough to give you everything you want, is big enough to take away everything you have." THOMAS JEFFERSON