



HAWAII CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ENDORSES MANDATORY STERILIZATION

**** PIJAC URGES IMMEDIATE ACTION!****

The Issue.

A conference committee has adopted changes to a House bill that originally focused solely on animal cruelty. The new bill, which contains none of the House provisions, will take away pet owners' ability to responsibly choose when and how their pet dogs and cats are spayed or neutered. If the [conference committee version of House Bill 243](#) is adopted by both the House and Senate, Hawaii will become the first state to ban pet owners from buying intact dogs and cats.

The Impact.

When the Senate amended HB 243, it subverted the whole purpose of that legislation. What was passed by the House as an anti-cruelty measure has now become an anti-pet owner measure. The reason why the amended bill was sent to a conference committee following its amendment in the Senate, however, was because **the House rejected concurrence with the Senate changes**. Although members of the House that were appointed to the conference committee have now signed off on those changes, the resulting bill is now subject to a final vote of the full House (as well as the full Senate, which already passed the bill in essentially its current form).

By making illegal "the sale by any pet retailer of an unsterilized cat or unsterilized dog in this state" HB 243 establishes an unprecedented restriction on pet owners. While pet retailers may now choose to sell puppies and kittens that have been spayed or neutered, adoption of the conference bill would mean that now **all** puppies and kittens **must** be sterilized. There are various reasons why some pet owners prefer to obtain intact animals, and the decision to spay or neuter a pet is now made by the pet owner in consultation with his or her licensed veterinarian. Amended HB 243 would inappropriately deprive pet owners of this prerogative by substituting the state's judgment in lieu of the veterinarian's professional judgment and imposing a one-size-fits-all standard for all pets rather than addressing the needs and circumstances of individual animals and pet owners.

PIJAC Position.

PIJAC strongly advocates responsible pet ownership, including the spaying or neutering of dogs and cats as appropriate. However, responsible pet owners may elect to keep their animals intact for various reasons. Whether and when to sterilize pets should be made on a case-by-case basis by pet owners after consultation with their veterinarian. This type of incursion into the decisions of responsible pet owners represents a slippery slope leading to increasing restrictions on pet ownership.

Recommended Action.

House members should be IMMEDIATELY contacted and urged to reject this perversion of the House bill. Ask your representative to vote NO on this bill! You may quickly and easily contact your elected officials through [PIJAC's Legislative Action Center](#). Let them know that:

- You support the original House bill, but this is a totally different bill. It should be voted down.
- Spay-neuter should be encouraged but not mandated.
- There are legitimate reasons why responsible pet owners choose to acquire intact animals.
- Negative health consequences for dogs and cats can arise from early sterilization.
- This is a decision that should be made on a case-by-case basis between a pet owner and his or her licensed veterinarian.

For questions or additional information about this bill, contact PIJAC's Michael Maddox via email at Michael@pijac.org or by phone at 202-452-1525, ext 106. You may also visit the [Breaking News](#) page of PIJAC's website for updates on this and other initiatives impacting pet owners and the pet trade.

PIJAC Members! PIJAC Fans! Join US...

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) has been protecting and promoting responsible pet ownership for nearly forty years. Follow our successes, events, and action alerts through Facebook and/or Twitter at PIJAC4pets. If you are not already a Member, please join us today by visiting www.pijac.org/membership. For additional information on PIJAC and its many exciting campaigns, please visit: www.pijac.org and www.dontmesswithmypet.org. Or, contact us at 1-800-553-PETS (1-800-553-7387); members@pijac.org.

On behalf of pets, responsible pet owners, and the pet industry, we thank you!