

Rebuttal to Misleading Effectiveness Claims

A fact sheet distributed by the opponents of the California Healthy Pets Act contains several misleading claims about the impact of universal spaying and neutering.

Here Are Just a Few Examples of Their Misleading Claims:

The Claim: The opponents claim that San Mateo County passed a “forced sterilization” ordinance in 1990. The opponents also claim that euthanasia rates spiked in San Mateo County following the ordinance.

The Truth: In fact, San Mateo implemented a *differential licensing fee ordinance* in 1991. After the ordinance went into effect, *euthanasia rates declined dramatically*:

The Peninsula Humane Society said yesterday that it put fewer stray dogs and cats to death for the second year in a row, crediting a 2-year-old county law intended to control the pet population.

Kathy Savesky, executive director of the Humane Society, said the society put to death 6,245 dogs and cats in the fiscal year ending June 30, 16.5 percent fewer than the 7,476 killed last year. Two years ago, 8,749 dogs and cats were put to death.

In March 1992, San Mateo County adopted a new law that requires dog and cat owners to spay or neuter their pets or pay \$5 to \$25 a year more for a pet license.

(*San Francisco Chronicle*, September 16, 1994)

The Claim: According to the opponents of AB 1634, King County, Washington, implemented a “forced sterilization” ordinance and pet licensing rates decreased.

The Truth: In fact, King County implemented a *differential licensing ordinance*. When they did, *licensing rates increased dramatically*, while euthanasia rates decreased.

Since 1992, he said, when Ordinance 123 forced owners of unaltered animals to pay an appreciably more expensive license fee than owners of unaltered animals:

- The number of dog licenses obtained has increased 28 per cent;
- The number of cat licenses obtained has increased 113 per cent;...
- Perhaps most important, the number of healthy, adoptable animals euthanized in shelters has decreased 52 per cent.

(*Vancouver Sun*, August 20, 1996)

The Claim: The opponents also claim that licensing rates declined “dramatically” after Aurora, Colorado, adopted a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance.

The Truth: Once again, the opponents have their facts wrong. After Aurora, Colorado, passed a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance, *licensing rates actually increased by 30%*.

[The law] took effect in April, requiring all cats and dogs to be spayed or neutered. The law also requires special permits to breed pets or to keep more than three dogs or five cats.

. . . The licensing of animals has shot up nearly 30% in the past three months, [Animal Care Division head Pam] Alford said.

(*Rocky Mountain News*, July 5, 1994)

