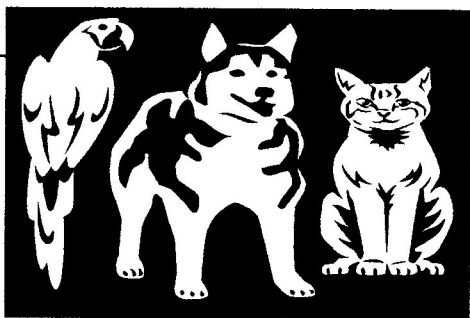


Domestic Violence And



HOUSE PETS

We as a nation learned after the disaster of Hurricane Katrina that people seeking shelter need to be able to protect their pets, too. California Senator Sheila Kuehl has proposed critical legislation in California that would help domestic violence victims protect their pets while they try to protect themselves.

Consider the dark reality for domestic violence victims with pets:

- An estimated 25 to 40 percent of domestic violence victims are unable to escape their abusers because they worry about what will happen to their pets or livestock;
 - 83 percent of directors of the largest shelters for domestic violence victims in the U.S. indicated that those entering the shelters discussed incidents of pet abuse in the family;
- 71 percent of pet-owning domestic violence victims in shelters reported that a pet had been threatened, injured or killed by their abuser; and
- 49 percent of pet-owning victims who fled their abusers and sought shelter continued to worry about their animals after entering a shelter.

Domestic violence victims seeking to flee an abuser are already frightened for their lives and the lives of their children; they need to know that their pets will be safe as well.

Thankfully, Senator Kuehl understands how important the human-animal bond is. The legislation she authored would include pets in domestic violence protection orders, and is an important step in preventing abusers from using pets to threaten their victims. If passed, California will join the states of Maine, Vermont and New York in leading the charge against domestic violence.

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