

**COMMITTEE ON LEGAL PROBLEMS OF THE AGING
COMMITTEE ON LEGAL ISSUES PERTAINING TO ANIMALS**

**A. 1825
S. 1660**

**M. of A. Glick
Senator Padavan**

AN ACT to amend the real property law, in relation to discrimination against certain tenants who own or keep pets.

THIS BILL IS APPROVED

These committees have joined together to express our strong approval of Assembly bill 1825, which would require that no person 62 years of age or older would be denied occupancy in, or evicted from, a multiple dwelling on the sole ground that he or she keeps a common household pet or pets, so long as the keeping of the pet is not prohibited by applicable law and the pet does not constitute a nuisance or cause damage to the premises.

Numerous studies show that pets are tremendously important for the health and well-being of the aging. For example, a study of 100 Medicare patients showed that seniors who live with dogs go to the doctor less frequently than those who do not, and that even the most highly stressed dog guardians in the study had 21% fewer physicians contacts than non dog-guardians (Siegel, 1990). Pet guardians in general have been shown to have lower blood pressure, lower triglyceride and cholesterol levels (Anderson, 1992), fewer minor health problems (Serpell, 1991) and higher one-year survival rates following coronary artery disease (Friedman, 1980). Dog guardians express less fear of being a crime victim, both on the street when with their dog and in their homes (Serpell, 1991).

The proposed amendment would help this particularly vulnerable population in two important ways. People who currently do not have pets because they live in housing that does not permit them could obtain them and thereby experience the substantial physical and psychological benefits of living with an animal. Moreover, others may currently live in pet-friendly housing and already have pets, but may need to move. Under the proposed amendment, they could do so without the fear of having to make a heart-wrenching choice between giving up their pets – sometimes their closest companions – and moving out of housing that has become unsatisfactory. Aging members of our society are particularly likely to have to make such a move, since deteriorating health may make housing that has heretofore been adequate no longer physically accessible, or may necessitate their being closer to their family or to health care facilities than they have been in the past.

In addition to supporting the many benefits experienced by people who live with animals, this legislation is of vital importance to the animals themselves. One of the primary reasons for pets being surrendered to shelters is that their guardians are moving to housing that does not allow pets. This legislation would thus help to slow the number of animals entering New York City's Center for Animal Care and Control, which must kill over 35,000 cats and dogs each year because they have lost their homes and there are not enough new homes available for them. The same benefits would accrue to animals in shelters throughout the state, most of which suffer from the same overcrowding that is present in the City.

For all of these reasons, we strongly support this proposed legislation, which would protect the relationship between members of this vulnerable population and the animal companions with whom they live and share a relationship that is of such enormous value to all involved.

REFERENCES

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