

Shelter Access The Bottom Line In Kellner / Duane Debate: Argument and Recrimination About Oreo Obscure The Issue

New York City (Feb. 8, 2010) - Advocates for the Kellner / Duane amendment call it "Oreo's Law", in reference to a one year old pit bull that was deemed too aggressive for adoption and euthanized by the ASPCA. This decision set off a firestorm of criticism and recrimination and generated the impetus for the proposed Kellner / Duane change to the state law regulating animal shelter operations. Supporters of the amendment have painted the ASPCA and its CEO Ed Sayres as black hearted scoundrels while opponents say the proposed law will have unintended consequences ranging from facilitating animal hoarding to landing difficult dogs in the perpetual twilight of life in a small cage at a marginal shelter or boarding facility.

Best Friends Animal Society believes that it is time for everyone concerned to lay down their weapons and get together to come up with a workable solution that has the support of all major stakeholders and that best serves the animals while addressing public safety concerns.

"The key issue here is broad shelter access for animal rescue organizations so that more lives can be saved," observed Francis Battista, a co-founder of Best Friends Animal Society. "It's a core component of any community's No More Homeless Pets strategy."

"Tragic though any animal's death is, the number of dogs that fit Oreo's profile is relatively few when compared to the thousands of animals killed in shelters because no home has been found for them. It's essential to ensure that shelter access for animal rescue organizations is not dependent on the preferences of a given shelter director or upon the negotiating skills of an animal rescue organization," Battista said.

The ASPCA is an important player in animal legislation in New York State. Passing a law that ensures broad shelter access in the state would be much easier with their participation, either with Kellner/Duane as it moves forward or with an alternate bill that accomplishes the same goals. Best Friends would like to see the contentious rhetoric set aside in the interests of arriving at a proposed bill that gives the maximum opportunity for more lives to be saved. Best Friends Animal Society has issued a policy statement regarding their position on laws pertaining to shelter access and will support legislation that aligns with this position.

About Best Friends Animal Society: Best Friends Animal Society is a nonprofit, membership organization building no-kill programs and partnerships that will bring about a day when there are No More Homeless Pets®. The society's leading initiatives in animal care and community programs are coordinated from its Kanab, Utah, headquarters, the country's largest no-kill sanctuary. This work is made possible by the personal and financial support of a grassroots network of members and community partners across the nation.