

Best Friends Animal Society: BFAS Statement On Oreo's Law



Best Friends Animal Society's Notes

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Best Friends

ANIMAL SOCIETY

Most issues that we deal with today in animal welfare are charged with emotion. The failure of the passage of the New York State Kellner/Duane Bill (Oreo's Law) is no different. Those who fought hard for the bill are now looking for outlets for their anger and people to blame. Today, that frustration was directed at Best Friends Animal Society over our neutrality on this bill.

We did not decide lightly to take a stance of neutrality on the bill. To the contrary, we had numerous conversations with those involved on both sides in the hope of refining the bill into something that all of the players could support and a bill that would save lives. Unfortunately, we quickly realized this issue was less about passage of legislation, and more of a nasty fight over ideology and past histories. The dialogue was not constructive and we felt we couldn't help either side budge. Instead, we chose to focus our efforts on immediate lifesaving work like the Tri-State Super Adoption Festival – an event that found homes for 300 animals in just one weekend.

We had several issues with the bill. One was the language around who would be approved to claim an animal from a shelter. The Kellner/Duane Bill allowed any animal 501(c)3 to do so, but excluded competent rescues that weren't federally tax exempt. Having that designation does not reflect an organization's ability to handle animals and see them adopted into good, loving homes. A 501(c)3 is merely a tax designation and says nothing about the organization's track record or skill to do right by the animals, especially animals that might need a little extra care. That doesn't even account for those out there who might take advantage of such a loophole for unscrupulous reasons. We also felt the reporting requirement in the bill was unrealistic for some small rural shelters to meet.

Despite allegations, it is untrue that Animal Ark was lobbied by Best Friends to get them to withdraw support for the bill. The email exchange and conversation between Mike Fry and Francis Battista took place on Nov. 30 and Dec 1, 2009 - a month before the legislature was even in session. We had not yet seen a final copy of the bill and were