



NAIA Trust Action Alert!

Small faction of vets join radicals in supporting prohibition Vermont Senate poised to approve ban on ear cropping

February 1, 2006: The Vermont Senate Judiciary Committee voted yesterday to ban ear cropping in the state. S250 now heads for the full Senate. If it passes the Senate, it then goes to a House committee for consideration.

The legislation tosses a sop to dog owners and exhibitors; only those who arrange for or perform the surgery will be in violation of the law and subject to a \$3000 fine and possible cruelty charges.

Few if any veterinarians in Vermont do ear cropping, so a small group from the state veterinary association jumped on the ban-wagon last week and encouraged lawmakers to pass the bill. The Vermont Veterinary Medical Association has about 300 members; 44 members (15 percent) voted 30-14 in favor of the ban.¹ Worthy of note is that Joanne Bourbeau, HSUS Northeast Director, sits on the VVMA animal welfare committee.

Shamefully, a few veterinarians who do not perform this surgery or who allow their personal opinions to cloud their judgment have joined a cadre of extremists in a quest to rob owners and other veterinarians of the right to determine how to care for their animals. Sadly, the vast majority of vets in the state have remained silent even though a ban would affect any veterinarian who does the surgery or arranges for it to be done and would set the stage for government interference in other aspects of veterinary practice, elective surgeries and treatments.

If the bill passes, Vermont will be the bellwether state for fanatic campaigns against a wide range of animal husbandry practices and open the door to further government interference between animal owners and their veterinarians. Farmers will not be immune, for they use several procedures that radicals consider cruel, including tail docking lambs, castrating calves and lambs, and dehorning cattle, procedures that are currently exempted under Vermont law.

What you can do:

The bill has been placed on the notice calendar; from there it can move quickly to a first reading in the full Senate. Senators will then debate the bill, ask questions, or propose amendments and vote on whether to schedule it for a second reading. If the vote is no, the bill will die. If the vote is yes, the second and third readings will be scheduled. It can also be skipped. If the bill passes the Senate after the third reading, it will go to the House for a repeat of the process. If the House passes a different version of the bill, a conference committee will be appointed to iron out differences. Once the Senate and the House agree, the bill goes to the governor for signing into law.

It is essential that Vermont lawmakers hear from constituents and those who travel to the state, especially for dog-related events. Because any bill that bans an animal husbandry practice for dogs or cats will

NAIA Trust for the Protection of Animals, Animal Owners and Animal Enterprises

Educating the Public about the Critical Difference between Animal Welfare and Animal Rights

Patti Strand, Trustee, NAIA Trust, PO Box 66579 Portland, OR 97290
503-761-1139 naia@involved.com



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eventually be used as a precedent to attack agricultural husbandry practices, It is also essential to contact members of the Senate and House agriculture committees, members whose constituents are farmers and ranchers.

Bills can move quickly in Vermont, so it is imperative that contacts with senators be made immediately, if not sooner. Contacts with representatives are also crucial as the bill could move to a House committee within days.

Check out the NAIA letter in opposition to S.250 at <http://www.naiatrust.org/PDF/Vermont1.pdf> and consider these points when opposing the bill: S.250

- allows government intrusion into the relationship between a dog owner and his veterinarian;
- carries a large and unfair penalty that may drive ear cropping underground, making it dangerous;
- permits one group to impose its values on another without having to demonstrate that a significant public good is served;
- creates a climate in which activists can harass veterinarians and dog owners and breeders;
- establishes a precedent that replaces the professional judgment of veterinarians with
- laws based on public opinion and the beliefs of special interest advocates.

The Vermont legislative website is <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/> . The bill status page is at <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/database/status/status.cfm> . Put S.250 in the search window for results.

The House Agriculture committee can be reached at: Representative David Zuckerman, chairman; dzuckerman@leg.state.vt.us

The House Judiciary Committee is likely to get the bill if it passes the Senate. Contact this committee at: William J. Lippert, chairman, at wlippert@leg.state.vt.us

Dog owners would do well to contact their own veterinarians as well and urge them to oppose the bill.

Note

1. "Veterinarians promote ban on cropping of pooch's ears" By John Zicconi Vermont Press Bureau January 28, 2006, Barre/Montpelier Times Argus, <http://www.timesargus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060128/NEWS/601280371/1002>

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