

# QUALITY STANDARDS FOR PRIVATELY RUN ANIMAL SHELTERS (HB 6334)

Connecticut Votes for Animals (CVA)'s priority for the 2017 Legislative Session is to support a bill requiring basic, humane standards of care and facility upkeep for private non-profit brick and mortar shelters. Such standards will prevent harm to animals awaiting adoption in substandard conditions.

The proposed bill would require privately run brick and mortar, non-profit shelters that house cats and dogs to register with the State Department of Agriculture, comply with humane standards of care, and be subject to inspection if warranted. A modest annual licensing fee (\$100) will offset any State inspection costs. This law will also prevent the costly animal cruelty cases that result in thousands of dollars of expenses for the municipality and related law suits. Standards of care will be developed through the regulatory process and in consultation with private shelters.

### PRECEDENT

Connecticut requires municipal animal shelters, animal importers, pet shops, kennels, and training and grooming facilities to register with the State, follow humane regulations, and be subject to inspection. Only private brick and mortar shelters are exempt from licensing, regulation, or inspection.



### NEED FOR LEGISLATION

While most private brick and mortar shelters are well run, the lack of oversight means other shelters fall through the cracks and can maintain deplorable conditions. Several recent high-profile cases in CT offer a glimpse of how well intentioned rescue groups can cause severe harm to animals.

Even if a facility receives multiple public complaints, Animal Control has no legal authority to inspect the shelter or intervene until the conditions escalate to a point where the animals are in imminent danger and an arrest warrant can be issued via CT's animal cruelty statute. With statutory shelter standards in place these situations may be prevented, thereby saving both the animals and costs to the State and municipalities.

### EXEMPTION FOR PRIVATE RESIDENCES

The proposed law only would apply to private, non-profit shelters and rescues that operate a building or facility used to house homeless animals outside one's residence. Barns, garages and other outbuildings on one's property will apply if they are being used exclusively for the housing of animals for rescue and adoption.

### IMPACT ON RESCUES

We propose baseline facility requirements that any well-run shelter will likely exceed. This law would also allow humane and professionally run organizations to be identified as certified and inspected animal care facilities in CT. Not only will this aide the animals in care at the shelter but it will protect and allow donors and clients to feel confident about supporting their work.

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