Pet Assistance Foundation

A compassionate presence in the community since 1955.

Special Edition 2017 Newsletter Page 1

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PET ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION PLAYS MAJOR ROLE IN SLAMMING DOOR ON PUPPY MILLS

(Story on page 2)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In past newsletters, I have stressed the three-pronged approach necessary to end pet overpopulation: Education, Legislation and Low Cost Sterilization. PAF has been there for nearly seven decades making inroads into these three critical areas; however, the day to day challenges of keeping the organization going, meeting the needs of the pet owning public as well as the urgent needs of abandoned and owned animals, have kept us from devoting significant time and resources to fully realize the potential benefits of all three of these approaches. That changed this spring.

In this special edition newsletter, we are pleased to share with you how new volunteers, the wisdom of our Board of Directors, the continued support of our donors and the dynamic synergy of working with other like-minded organizations, has allowed us to increase our impact on situations affecting animals in Southern California.

This newsletter will update you on our recent impact in legislation. In closing, I will leave you with the words of the legendary Broadway actor and animal activist, Gretchen Wyler, whom we worked with in the late 70's and 80's to bring an end to pound seizure, (relinquishment of shelter animals for medical research). While preparing volunteers for the tough legislative battle ahead of us, Gretchen uttered words that I have never forgotten. "Ultimately, we have to legislate kindness." I leave you with those words as we work tirelessly to affect change through legislation.

Yours in Compassion,

Wendy Aragon

President

Top Left: CA Assemblyman Patrick O'Donnell, author of AB 485. (Natalie Ford Photo) Bottom Left: Judie Mancuso of SCIL and Betsy Denhart of PAF outside the Senate B&P Committee hearing. Above: PAF Volunteers Judith Crumpton and Bob Wonder with Wendy Aragon at SCIL's 10 Year Anniversary Party. (Natalie Ford Photo)

PET ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION HELPS SLAM DOOR ON PUPPY MILLS

Commercial breeders and traffickers of cats, dogs and rabbits are infamous for their cruel and callous treatment of the animals they veiw as disposable commodities. Their factory approach epitomizes so much of what is wrong with the way our society views animals: profit-driven, focused on maximum production, providing minimal care and no socialization, lacking concern for the adult animals other than their ability to reproduce, with no thought for their babies but the price they will bring. These "puppy millers" use their inherently cruel and exploitative business model to mass-produce puppies, kittens, and rabbit kits.

So when **PAF** learned that Judie Mancuso, president and founder of **Social Compassion in Legislation** (**SCIL**), had persuaded California State Assemblyman Patrick O'Donnell to author a bill addressing the matter, **PAF** immediately saw its significance, and offered to do all it could to help **SCIL** promote **State Assembly Bill 485**, the Pet Rescue and Adoption Act. In brief, **AB 485** will prohibit every pet store in the state from selling companion animals that do not come from rescues or shelters.

The passage of any state bill of consequence is complicated and intricate, and California's humane community had a suspenseful spring, as **AB 485** progressed along its winding path:

- April 17, State Assembly's Business and Professions Committee voted to approve, 10-1 (Ayes-Noes)
- May 17, State Assembly Appropriations Committee voted to approve, 10-4.
- May 30, Full State Assembly, 55-11, with bipartisan support.

July presented a higher hurdle: the State Senate's Business and Professions Committee. The small size of the committee made every vote count, and the hearing date of July 17 fell during the hectic time when legislators hustle to wrap things up before summer break. Added to that were the extensive and nearly successful lobbying efforts of the opposition to paint the bill as anti-business and a job-loser. The outcome was in doubt until the very end.

What turned the tide were the sustained grass roots efforts of dedicated volunteers and our very own **PAF** in the months preceding the hearing. This groundwork provided **SCIL** with the platform of support that is indispensable to the success of any legislative initiative.

Here is an account of **PAF**'s actions to support **AB 485**:

- **PAF** helped coordinate efforts to collect letters of endorsement from the 35 municipalities with similar ordinances already in place, illustrating for the senators that ***this legislation works.***
- We organized, managed, and funded a phone-bank operation to contact all 1,200 pet-related retail businesses in California, then created spreadsheets by district, to show individual legislators how this bill would affect their constituents.
- Next, the **PAF** phone bank solicited letters of support from humane organizations throughout the state.
- We sent mystery shoppers to local pet stores, seeking information we could use should pet storeowners appear at the next committee meeting, and uncovering numerous code violations, unhealthy puppies, and shifty sales tactics in the process.
- We used social media to generate phone calls of support from concerned citizens, and invite organizations and individuals to support the bill in person at the committee hearing.

Top Left: Inside a rabbit mill, photo courtesy of PETA. Above : Wendy Aragon, Karen Halligan, DVM, of SCIL and Robert J. Aragon on steps of the Capitol in Sacramento.

Meanwhile, **SCIL** mobilized successful pet storeowners in support of the bill. The powerful testimony of one of the most successful and widely respected among them highlighted the effectiveness of a different business model: one based on featuring companion animals exclusively sourced from rescues and shelters. This clearly undermined the anti-business, job-loss argument made by the bill's opponents.

SCIL solicited the testimony and support of influential statewide leaders of the humane community, including **State Humane Association of California** and **California Animal Control Directors Association**, and **Los Angeles City** Councilmember Paul Koretz.

Leaders from **SCIL**, **PAF** and dedicated volunteers, many from the San Diego area, traveled to Sacramento to attend the Committee hearing. Their dominant presence and articulate testimony helped create an intense climate of support for the bill, and it passed the Senate B & P Committee with flying colors, 7-1-1.

Fast forward to September 12, the third reading of **AB 485** by the California Senate. Senator Cathleen Galgiani of the 5th District presented the bill, along with a powerful appeal on behalf of the animals; so deserving of the protection and chances at life it would give them. Victory was huge: 38-0-2, and after a brief stop for amendment approval by the assembly, the bill is on its way to Governor Brown.

U R G E N T !

After reading this account of **AB 485** we **implore** you to send an email to **Governor Brown**, asking him to sign this bill. The governor has made it clear: *"I want to hear from the people before I sign this bill"!!!!!* **See details below.**

That **AB 485** has gotten this far, despite the powerful lobbying of its well-funded opposition, is a tribute to the vision, tenacity, skill and political acumen of **SCIL**'s founder and president, Judie Mancuso. Her brilliant leadership and the legislation's significance motivated dedicated volunteers and **PAF** to make a concerted effort to pass it.

Though major humane organizations such as **ASPCA**, **HSUS** and **Best Friends** saw the merit of such a bill, they did not believe the votes were there to pass it, and initially withheld their support for that reason. They felt the time to introduce such a bill was still a year or two away. By June, the bill's steady progress through the legislative process persuaded them to get behind the bill. Now, heading into the home stretch, **AB 485** enjoys the strong support of **ASPCA**, **HSUS** and **Best Friends**.

It is a commentary on the quality and extent of Mancuso's legislative contacts and of her acute political intuition that she sensed the time was right, and that the necessary votes were within reach if broadly-based grass roots support could be mobilized.

The passage of **AB 485** will reverberate nationally. It will make California the first of all fifty states to enact anti-puppy mill legislation, and in so doing will motivate humane organizations in other parts of the country to follow suit. In fact, it already has.

H O W Y O U C A N H E L P

1. *Email Governor Brown TODAY and ask him to sign AB 485. List your own reasons, or make it as simple as this:*

   Dear Governor Brown: Please sign AB 485. Its enactment will be a gigantic step forward in solving our state's pet overpopulation problem, while shutting the door on the cruelty of kitten, rabbit, and puppy mills.

2. *Include your name and address, then Email him at leg.unit@gov.ca.gov*

3. *Spread the word. Share this with friends. Ask everyone you know to send an email too.*

Your support of AB 485 not only promotes adoption and lessens the flow of surplus pets into California, it also helps animals currently enslaved as breeding stock all over the country!

BREAKING NEWS

Photo Credit: E44.ro

As **AB 485** gains national media attention, it is crucial to the future protection of animals that the smaller, grass roots organizations that drove this bill get the credit they deserve, and that animal advocates have the information needed to direct support and donations to where they will make the greatest impact.

On September 12, 2017, **AB 485** caught the attention of the national media when, after years in the making, this trailblazing legislation passed the California State Senate by an overwhelming majority, and was sent on to await the governor's decision.

What is great about this coverage is that it calls attention to a long-neglected abuse of animals and broadens overall public awareness of the heart-breaking problems of pet over-population and abuse that daily confront the humane community.

What is concerning is that, as the media turns to their standard list of experts in the humane community, such as **HSUS** and the **ASPCA**, for commentary on **t**he bill, an injustice may occur. For while their input may be valid, unless mention is also made of those truly responsible for **AB 485**, the effect can be misleading, giving the false impression that they were involved in its progress or creation.

In truth **Social Compassion in Legislation (SCIL)** ***was, from the very beginning, the driving force behind the bill.*** It was **SCIL** who initiated it, **SCIL** who persuaded Assemblyman O'Donnell to author it, and **SCIL** who shepherded it through California's legislative maze. Like a modern day David, this small organization faced the Goliath forces of the **American Kennel Club**, the **Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council**, the **California Retailers Association**, and more. And it did not start there.

For years now, **SCIL** and other dedicated grassroots organizations and advocates have worked hard to pass anti-puppy mill ordinances in **36** California municipalities. This laid the groundwork for **AB 485** and the "boots on the ground," grass roots effort led by our very own **PAF**, other humane organizations and impassioned volunteers who called, wrote, and visited their elected officials to plead their case. They collected extensive supporting data, created reports, traveled to Sacramento, attended city council meetings, and picketed puppy mill stores, all to create the climate of support that is indispensable to the passage of a state law. As it gained momentum, **AB 485**'s list of supporters grew, and in June, 2017, **HSUS**, **ASPCA**, and **Best Friends** added their names. By then, the bill was facing its second Senate committee, nearing the home stretch.

SCIL's founder and leader, Judie Mancuso, did it all on a shoestring budget. What she lacked in funds, she made up for in political acumen, knowledge of the legislative process, a growing respect among state legislators, and total dedication. ***It would be a grave injustice for the credit clearly due* SCIL *for this outstanding contribution to animal welfare to be misplaced.***

The grass roots, hands-on humane organizations working in the trenches must never be overlooked. This is where you find the groups connecting directly with the issues animals face today. This is where even small donations can actually fund solutions. This is where you find the people who have dedicated their lives, often at great personal sacrifice, to the belief that animals deserve protection and humane treatment.

While **PAF** is always in need of donations for our spay and neuter programs, we feel strongly that any donations the passage of **AB 485** might inspire should go to **SCIL**, whose vision and tenacity spearheaded this legislation. To support their efforts please visit: **SocialCompassioninLegislation.org.**

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555-B East Artesia Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90805

Administrative Line: (310) 732-1230

Toll-Free Spay/Neuter Hotline:
1(877) SPAY PET [1(877) 772-9738]

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The End is Near…

…see page 3 to learn how you can help California lead the nation in shutting down the brutal and inhumane commercial pet breeding industry with ONE email.

*THE **GOVERNOR** WANTS TO HEAR FROM **YOU** TODAY!*