

CONCERNED DOG OWNERS OF CALIFORNIA

is an organization that was put together for the primary purpose of giving dog (and cat) owners an effective way to help manage and direct the legislation that is being directed at us around the state and in various municipalities and to be the arm to develop compelling and appropriate media and materials to achieve our goals.

An effective legislative process involves communication, education and money. In the past some groups have refused to be a part of the legislative process. We think there is a better way. So CDOC was formed as an umbrella group for the State to gather together all of our talents in a focused manner. Those who propose the legislation will always have the advantage over those who merely fight it – so we need to get ahead of the curve on the issues that have given rise to some of the legislation we find so distressing.

Even though numbers in shelters are going down, there is more we can do but we must take a lead. This is everyone's problem and who better than dog (and cat) people to come up with innovative answers. How do they tell responsible people from backyard breeders?

So what are the specifics?

- We have to have at least one lobbyist who works for what we need in California. We are all grateful to the AKC for stepping up and paying for a lobbyist to fight AB 1634. But he will go away when their money is gone. We need our own representative – someone who will work with CDOC to guide Club and individual members on how we can become a force in this state and in our local communities.
- We will prepare media campaigns that can be used and are effective. We will work with existing organizations to prepare educational materials on responsible dog ownership, spay and neuter, and training – in English and Spanish, both written and multi-media. We will work to provide our side with a high media profile so the public and the lawmakers hear both sides of the story and see actual, provable numbers.
- We will raise money. Our opponents have an annual budget of more than a hundred million (nationally). We need a budget of millions so we need a lot of fund-raising. But like the opposition, we have access to the same tools to generate money. So we need to be active in fund raising from Clubs, pet food companies, pet equipment companies and very importantly, individuals – both “dog” people and the general public who love their animals.
- As a PAC (Political Action Committee) we can make contributions to the politicians who support responsible ownership of dogs and cats. And we can campaign against those who do not. We will be professional and courteous in dealing with our opponents and the media.
- We will have a website (www.concerneddogownersofcalifornia.com (also org and net) and www.cdocalifornia.com (and org) to provide up to date (with your help) information, downloadable PDF files, legislative reports, sample letters, etc. We will link to websites with compatible goals.
- We will work with all groups, UKC, AKC, Agility Groups, Working Dog Groups, the cat organizations so that everyone can have a place at the table.

This will not be an easy undertaking but we think we have a committed core group and we know there are many, many out there who have skills and talents and contacts we can tap to the benefit of all.

So what do you do?

First, contribute money. We are talking about a great deal of money here. If you want to be heard, send us your personal check now. And we need every single Club to participate. So go to your all-breed and breed clubs and spread the word. If they want to hear more, have them call us or email us. We will come to meetings if possible. As soon as we have our seed money, we can begin a bigger individual fund-raising effort to the general public. In about ten days the website will have a PayPal Option.

Checks should be sent to CDOC, 22647 Ventura Blvd. #108, Woodland Hills, Ca 91364-4172

AB 1634 is out of Committee. The names of the people on the Appropriations Committee are listed below. Write to those people and point out this is not revenue neutral, it will cost the State of California. Numbers are being put together on what dog show revenues produce in taxes. They will be posted on the website.

If you have ever sold a puppy or kitten or talked to someone about selling a puppy, get them involved. Probably not many of them would have wanted the state to tell them their animal needed major surgery at 4 months of age.

Do this same thing in the ten blocks around you. If the legislators are inundated with mail from “regular folks” who are in their district and oppose this legislation, they will listen.

Go to the field offices of your assemblymen and meet with their legislative aides. Take your neighbors. Have the same type of impact (always polite and professional) that we made today. Take materials with you. To copy a slogan we have all heard, this is a “boots on the ground” project and if only a few take part, we will lose.

Please feel free to contact Bill Shelton, Bruce Schwartz, Carol Esterkin, Louis Krokover, Cathie Turner or Sharon Shilkoff with questions or suggestions. Going forward together, we can win.

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