



*Alley Cat Rescue*  
The U.S. Cats Protection Association  
P O Box 585, Mt. Rainier, MD 20712  
[www.saveacat.org](http://www.saveacat.org)

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The Honorable Micah Kellner  
834 Legislative Office Building  
Albany, NY 12248

December 14, 2009

Re: Oreo's Law

Dear Assembly Member Mr. Micah Kellner,

We write to you on behalf of our 60,000 members to say thank you for deciding to introduce "Oreo's Law" in the New York State legislation. This law has been a long time coming and would make a significant change in the lives of shelter animals and those who work unconditionally everyday to save them. This law will make it illegal for animal shelters to kill an animal who a rescue organization is willing to save; which only makes sense. Why should an animal be put to death, using taxpayer money, if someone else is willing to use their private money to rescue the animal? The majority of Americans would agree this law is a necessity in the saving of countless animals and reducing the euthanasia rates at shelters. Not to mention, this law would bridge the political gap between kill-shelters and no-kill shelters with the animals solely in mind.

As the No-Kill Movement gathers more support, the law also needs to reflect the fundamental ideas on which the movement is based. Again, the American people do not wish for animals to be killed simply because of a *lack of resources*, and they will no longer passively accept that animals must be killed for such a reason. The public is not willing to stand by and allow the killing to continue; they are ready for a change; they are getting involved; and they are doing something about it. Subsequently, a key element in their being successful in rescuing animals is having support from the law. In the sad case of Oreo, a dog was put to death despite the fact that a rescue organization was willing to take on the responsibility of her recovery and long-term care. Why would we allow this to happen? There was no "lack of resources" in this case, so there was no reason for this to happen. Simply, the law turned its back on Oreo and every other shelter animal that will die even though someone is willing to help him/her. Currently, individuals and rescue organization work everyday in a shadow of fear from being persecuted for helping animals, and we are tired of working this way.

In driving the No-Kill Movement, we hope that Oreo's law will be passed, just as a similar law was passed in California. Even after large opposition from animal shelters and their supporters, state legislators passed the bill with overwhelmingly bipartisan support. California's lawmakers realized this bill only made sense. They know it is in the best interest of every party involved (including the animals) to allow privately-funded rescues to save animals instead of using taxpayer money to kill them. It is laws like this and like Oreo's, that support the tireless efforts of individuals and rescue organizations in saving animals that deserve to be saved, while reflecting the humane, compassionate values of the American public.



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But to think that Oreo's case is rare and that animal shelters *are* willing to work with No-Kill rescue organizations to save animals is ignorant. Situations like Oreo's happen everyday all across the country, and shelters repeatedly refuse the assistance of smaller rescues willing to step in and save animals they are so determined to kill. Mr. Kellner, we speak from experience, in that we have seen this happen to rescue groups and it has happened to us. A rescuer goes to a local shelter to save an animal, only to be confronted by a list of reasons why he/she cannot help that animal. We are told "there is an application on that animal;" (which frankly, if someone is interested in adopting an animal, why is that animal *still* sitting in the shelter?!) Or we are told some other reason why an animal cannot be rescued, only to learn later that the animal was killed. This law will allow cat rescue organizations to save un-socialized kittens that the shelter would otherwise euthanize, and it would allow feral cats to be rescued, sterilized, and placed back in his/her colony or relocated to a sanctuary. These animals will be allowed to be saved, even though the shelter director may oppose TNR, foster programs, and working with rescue organizations. This should not be about politics, but about the animals...the animals that are in this situation because of irresponsible individuals who do not sterilize their pets and "dump" or abandon them, where they go on to reproduce.

Some oppose the bill, saying it could place animals in bad situations. Current state laws are in place to prevent such neglectful and cruel situations like dog fighting or hoarders. Plus, the bill could suggest that any animal rescue organization interested in saving a shelter animal must have a 501(c)3 IRS status, and to bar any organization whose board member(s) has been convicted of animal cruelty/neglect or dog fighting. But to oppose the bill because *some* animals might be placed into bad situations and allow shelters to kill millions of animals a year is absurd. If the rescue effort was based on this principle, no animals would be adopted. Yes, precautions need to be in place in order to prevent such situations, and when such situations occur, we need to ensure those responsible are punished by the fullest extent of the law; but to say that *all* no-kill shelters are hoarders and to deny them from saving animals, while millions are being killed is irresponsible.

We cannot bring Oreo back, but we can prevent this from happening to other helpless animals. By introducing this law and legislation continuing to support similar laws, Oreo will not have died in vain. This is the perfect opportunity for us to learn from a tragic mistake and make things right. The American public wishes to see an end to the killing of shelter animals, and this law will help do that. Again, thank you for introducing this law and you have our support.

Respectfully,

Louise Holton  
Alley Cat Rescue, President and Founder