

## **APPENDIX – Why Ypsilanti Township should avoid a law that mandates spay/neuter of “pit bulls”**

### **Breed restrictions are costly**

Topeka recently repealed entirely its extensive ordinance regulating "pit bulls". Pit bull restrictions proved too costly. The city reported its budget for animal control averaged \$27,000 each year in cost overruns primarily for confining dogs suspected of being pit bulls. The city has adopted instead a breed neutral ordinance.

A mandatory law targeting pit bulls, or any breed, means additional animal control workers for identification and enforcement and litigation, sheltering, vet care and other costs of care for restricted breeds that have been impounded and must be held pending hearings; less in licensing fees as owners decline to register restricted breeds for fear of not being able to afford or follow through on restrictions; less shelter and resources for other animals that are as a result euthanized.

**Problems with mandatory spay/neuter laws** In addition to the examples of Los Angeles, San Francisco and Kansas City cited in the article:

1. San Mateo County, CA passed a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance in 1991. After the effective date of the ordinance, dog deaths in the areas governed by the ordinance, actually increased 126% and cats 86% while licenses declined by 35%. (For the county as a whole dog deaths decreased 5% and cats 16% in 1993; in 1994 dog deaths declined 12% and cats 17%.) From 1991-1994 there were no cat breeder permits and 50 permits for dog breeders, eight of which were renewals. In addition, licenses dropped dramatically. For 1998-99, the number dropped to 36,023, a dramatic decline from the 48,000-51,000 range of the past two decades.
2. A 2000 ordinance in Los Angeles city required the spay/neuter of all dogs and cats with exceptions for breeders. After that, there was been a decline in dog licensing compliance. The animal control budget after passage of the law rose 269%., from \$6.7 million to \$18 million. The city hired additional animal control officers and bought new trucks and equipment just to enforce the new law.
3. Capitola, California enacted a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance in 1991. After that, licensing compliance dropped significantly.
4. In Montgomery County, MD the mandatory spay/neuter law was repealed. When the law was enacted, it was estimated that 550 breeding permits would be issued per year. In reality only an average of 30 permits were issued per year. There was an estimated 50% decline in licensing compliance. Although the euthanasia rate declined 21.5% after the ordinance was passed, it had declined 34% prior to enactment of the law.

5. Fort Worth TX also ended its mandatory spay/neuter program. In that city licensing compliance fell off after passage of the ordinance. As a result there was a reduction in rabies vaccinations which led to an increase in rabies in the city.

6. When it was passed in 1996, the Camden County, New Jersey mandatory spay/neuter ordinance required a \$500 permit fee to possess an intact dog or cat. In 2000 it was changed to \$10, because of there were so few requests for it. But then again in 2001 the permit fee was again raised to \$100, its current rate. As for the euthanasia rates since the effective date of the ordinance, the PAWS NJ website comments, "An analysis of these statistics shows the Humane Society of Southern NJ which operates the Camden County Animal Shelter, to be consistently one of the leading, if not the leading killers of animals in the state of New Jersey." The report covers 1998-2001, well after the effective date of the mandatory spay neuter ordinance. The site's report on the top 50 New Jersey animal shelters reveals some in Camden County have significantly lower euthanasia rates than others in the state, but at least 2 had the highest kill rates in New Jersey.

7. In King County, Washington a 1992 ordinance required all dogs and cats over 6 months old to be spayed/neutered unless the guardian buys an unaltered license for \$60, \$40 more than for an altered pet. Chap IV, Secs. 11.04.035, 11.04.210, 11.04.400. The ordinance provided for a breeder certification program. Sec. 11.04.570

License compliance has appeared to decrease since passage of the ordinance. Animal control expenses have increased 56.8% and revenues only 43.2%. In 1990 the total cost of animal control was \$1,662,776; in 1997, it was \$3,087,350. Euthanasia rates actually fell at a slower rate after passage of the ordinance. In the years prior to enactment of the law, euthanasia rates were plummeting in King County. The data shows that the one real success as a result of the ordinance was the increase in adoptions.

8. In Aurora CO which requires breeder permits as part of its mandatory spay/neuter ordinance, licensing compliance has dropped dramatically. Secs. 14-42; 14-71(b), 14-101(a)(1).

9. Pinellas County Florida has required breeder licensing since 1992. Sec. 14-29. Since then the animal control budget has increased 75% with revenue increasing only 13%. There have also been increases in shelter intake and euthanasia rates since the law took effect.

10. Euthanasia rates in Montgomery County, MD were already dropping prior to passage of the now repealed mandatory spay/neuter law. Euthanasia rates were reported to have dropped during that time because of the County's successful adoption program.

### **Successful subsidized spay/neuter programs**

1. New Hampshire launched a statewide publicly funded spay and neuter program in 1994. Between 1994 and 2000, the state's eight largest shelters admitted 30,985 fewer dogs and cats

than in the six years preceding the program and saved an estimated \$2.2 million statewide. In this same time period New Hampshire's euthanasia rate dropped 75%.

2. Los Angeles opened the first spay/neuter municipal clinic in the United States in 1971. Dog owners at that time paid \$10 to license spayed/ neutered dogs and \$40 for intact dogs; cats were not required to be licensed. By 1987 the number of animals euthanized had dropped by 58.1%. These clinics were considered a success but were closed in 1992. The number of animals euthanized went from 145,000 in 1971 to 30,650 in 1997.

3. In Charlotte NC numbers of dogs euthanized in 1980 after a spay/neuter clinic opened dropped 40% from 7814 to 4658. The city also saved 39% overall in animal control costs.

4. A subsidized spay/neuter clinic opened in Santa Barbara CA in 1975 and within a decade the number of euthanized animals fell 80%. San Francisco CA (SFSPCA) began subsidized spay/neuter in 1976. By 1991 euthanasia of adoptable dogs and cats ceased altogether. (Interestingly, a couple of years ago the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco tabled the issue of a mandatory spay neuter bill in view of concerns about cost and effectiveness.)

5. Because of a subsidized spay/neuter clinic in Huron Valley MI which opened in 1975, euthanasia rates dropped 50% in less than a decade.

6. Aug., 2003 study of a possible program in Maine based on successful voluntary, subsidized spay/neuter programs in New Hampshire and New Jersey,  
[http://www.spayusa.org/main\\_directory/03-programs\\_and\\_clinics/statewide\\_publicly\\_funded/study\\_three\\_state\\_programs.pdf](http://www.spayusa.org/main_directory/03-programs_and_clinics/statewide_publicly_funded/study_three_state_programs.pdf)

7. After FACE established a subsidized spay/neuter program in Indianapolis in 1999 euthanasia rates for dogs and cats have fallen from nearly 22,000 per year to about 9,000 as of 2009.

8. The Oregon Humane Society recently estimated a typical low-cost sterilization runs \$49 per cat and \$75 per dog, vs. \$319 to hold an animal until adoption and not including the cost of euthanasia — a return of at least \$4 to \$6 on every dollar spent for sterilization vs. “catch and hold” and kill.

9. Humane Alliance which operates a national spay/neuter response team, a model and resource for other communities starting subsidized spay/neuter programs, has reduced euthanasia rate at its local shelter in Asheville, North Carolina by 75% since opening in 1994. The euthanasia rate in 2009 was 0.05%.