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National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA) www.naiaonline.org

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Chicago, IL – The anti-pet movement has found new life in a proposal that would impose mandatory spay/neuter on most Chicago pet owners. While strongly supporting voluntary spay/neuter of pets, NAIA urges that this important decision be left with pet owners in consultation with their veterinarians, not imposed on them by the government.

Mandatory spay neuter legislation has been promoted and passed in major jurisdictions across the US with no measurable success. At the same time, its passage has consistently produced grievous unintended consequences. Instead of encouraging respect and support for municipal animal services and pet laws, it creates scofflaws, pushes the owners of unaltered pets out of the licensing pool and away from veterinary care, and decreases the supply of home raised puppies and kittens produced by the most conscientious breeders in the local community, the law abiding pet owners who would be most impacted by this law.

NAIA National Director, Patti Strand, points out that, “Mandatory spay/neuter licensing laws don’t take into account that the pet owners causing most of the problems – the ones who don’t confine their dogs, who engage in dog fights and allow their dogs to randomly breed – are the same people who don’t license their dogs.” Solving neighborhood dangerous dog problems requires serious enforcement actions targeting criminal and irresponsible owners, not coercive new laws aimed at everyone with an intact pet.

In view of continuing campaigns that tout the benefits of mandatory spay/neuter legislation, which have never been substantiated, the NAIA believes that it is time for a new and clear resolution to guide governmental efforts in solving pet-related problems. Therefore, we respectfully submit:

The Responsible Pet Owner’s Approach to Animal Regulation

Whereas even the most sincere lawmakers can get swept along momentarily by well marketed but flawed ideas; and

Whereas mandatory spay/neuter legislation has never succeeded anywhere in the US; and

Whereas mandatory spay/neuter laws have generally led to increased costs for animal control agencies, as Santa Cruz, California encountered: <http://www.naiaonline.org/pdfs/SC%20budget.pdf>; and

Whereas mandatory spay/neuter laws like the one proposed in Chicago penalize only the law abiding minority who actually license their pets; and

Whereas similar legislation elsewhere has pushed good people out of the licensing system and reduced certainty regarding rabies vaccination rates; and

Whereas top medical professionals and animal experts, such as the Illinois (www.isvma.org) and Chicago (www.chicagovma.org) veterinary associations, the American Kennel Club (www.akc.org) and

Cat Fanciers Associations (www.cfainc.org), and moderate, fact-based animal welfare organizations such as the National Animal Interest Alliance (www.naiaonline.org) all oppose mandatory spay/neuter; and

Whereas the veterinary scientific literature disputes claims that neutering dogs will diminish dog bites; and

Whereas mandatory spay/neuter laws have proven unenforceable and generated constitutional challenges that are currently in the courts; and

Whereas virtually everyone but outright criminals wants to eliminate dog fighting; and

Whereas any system that makes the law abiding, responsible pet owners who license their pets accountable for the ones who don't is inherently unfair and destined to fail; and

Whereas modern learning theory and dog trainers teach that success only comes from 1) rewarding good behavior; 2) correcting bad behavior; and 3) never giving a command that cannot be enforced;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the city of Chicago vote NO on this new spay/neuter proposal and instead work with the law abiding pet experts in veterinary associations, kennel and cat clubs and national animal welfare groups to write effective, enforceable laws that will build rather than destroy community support for Animal Care and Control and respect for pet laws.

Further, NAIA recommends a serious look at NAIA's Guide to Pet Friendly Ordinances

<http://www.naiaonline.org/pdfs/petfriendlyguide.pdf> and Model Ordinance:

<http://www.naiaonline.org/pdfs/NAIA%20Model%20Animal%20Control%20Law%20Final.pdf>.

Together they offer methods for writing enforceable laws that build support for community animal control by rewarding responsible pet owners and applying meaningful penalties to problem owners.

For more information, please call on the National Animal Interest Alliance at www.naiaonline.org or at 503-761-8962