



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

June 26, 2015

Re: Support Assembly Bill 6626- Allowing Service/Therapy Animals in Domestic Violence Shelters

Dear Governor Cuomo:

The American Kennel Club (AKC) writes to express our support for Assembly Bill 6626, which would allow victims of domestic violence entering a state residential domestic violence shelter/program to bring their service or therapy animals with them, as long as the animal meets specific terms outlined in state law defining service and therapy animals.

Victims of domestic violence are in a vulnerable and frightening situation, and the practical assistance and comfort that a service/therapy animal provides can be essential to victims. The AKC recognizes the troublesome dynamic involving pets and domestic violence. Sociological and psychological studies show that a significant percentage of domestic violence cases involving family victims also involve threats and/or actual harm perpetrated against pets. For this reason, many victims of domestic abuse are reluctant to leave a dangerous situation for fear of the fate of a pet left behind.

The American Kennel Club is proud to be a leader in addressing this important issue. In the past five years, The AKC Humane Fund has provided more than 80 grants to shelters, women's organizations, and other related groups to assist with arrangements for caring for the pets of domestic violence victims.

We believe that Assembly Bill 6626 is important legislation that provides an essential protection for victims of domestic violence, as well as their service/therapy dogs. We thank Assemblywoman Rosenthal for introducing this bill and we respectfully ask for your support by signing it into law.

Sincerely,

Sheila Goffe, Director
AKC Government Relations

Cc: Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal, Sponsor, A. 6626