

## Legislation - What's Hot !!

### "BUMPY SURF" in Hawaii.....SB 2504 passed out of committee

*by Joan Miller, CFA Legislative Information Liaison*

Hawaii has a short legislative session. Bills tend to be reintroduced each year if they do not pass. Often nothing happens, but this year things are different. The cat/dog fancys and pet stores in Hawaii are facing over two dozen anti-pet seller proposals. Several are moving through committees with little consideration for the strong opposition.

SB 2504 is an example of the most onerous State mandatory spay/neuter bill ever proposed in the U.S. The bill, as introduced, required every seller of cats and dogs to microchip and sterilize all kittens and puppies prior to sale or transfer. Lobbyists representing HSUS and the Hawaiian Humane Society have joined forces and both organizations have influenced the author of SB 2504, Senator Clayton Hee.

Today (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>) in Honolulu, I sat through a hearing in the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection as the co-chair presented an amended bill that was said to be a compromise arising out of the established stakeholders committee consensus. With over 160 letters of opposition, including many from cat fanciers, dog breeders, pet store owners, CFA's Legislative Committee, CFA Regional Director, AKC, PIJAC, the bill has been dramatically amended. The stakeholders group was selected among speakers at the first Committee on CCP hearing February 7<sup>th</sup>. Our interest were expertly represented by Ken Cribbs, President of Hawai'i Hulacat Club. Ken has worked closely with the CFA Legislative Group and the pet store representatives to protect the sellers of cats/dogs and object to meaningless, unenforceable laws.

As of today SB2504 passed out of Committee with a directive to amend language that will no longer force sterilization of any cat/dog. The "pet seller" definition will apply only to retail pet stores or those who sell cats or dogs to pet stores, Pet stores must microchip dogs/cats and collect license fees for dogs. There can be no sales, exchange, give away of cats/dogs in a "public place" (with humane groups exempted). Pet stores shall provide information to animal control or law enforcement, including disclosure of the source of their animals. Pet sellers must provide information on spay-neuter benefits to purchasers. Penalties have increased to \$500 per violation.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of many cat fanciers, and Ken Cribbs in particular, the amended bill is better. We do not believe that targeting pet stores, as has happened, is fair. Pet stores in Hawaii are generally responsible. They don't sell pedigreed cats and they obtain dogs from reputable breeders, mainly importing from Australia. We will continue to review the proposed language changes and communicate with the next committee members. SB 2504 will now go on to the Judiciary and Labor Committee. Senator Hee chairs this committee.....

It appears that Hawaii has become the playground for bad dog/cat bills. With a very fragile cat fancy in this State we must help our advocates so these laws do not become models for the rest of the USA.