

File No. 251162

Committee Item No. 3

Board Item No. \_\_\_\_\_

## COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Committee: Public Safety and Ngbh Services

Date: April 9, 2026

Board of Supervisors Meeting:

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Prepared by: Monique Crayton

Date: April 3, 2026

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1 [Health Code - Spaying, Neutering, and Sterilizing of Dogs]

2

3 **Ordinance amending the Health Code to require that every dog in San Francisco, with**  
4 **certain exceptions, be spayed, neutered, or chemically sterilized, rather than requiring**  
5 **such procedures only for pit bulls; to establish a process and fee for applying for an**  
6 **unaltered dog permit, and a process for granting, denying, or revoking such permit,**  
7 **with a hearing following a denial or revocation; to regulate the transfer, sale, and**  
8 **breeding of unaltered dogs; and to establish penalties and conditions of impoundment**  
9 **for violations of the mandatory spay, neuter, or chemical sterilization requirements.**

10 NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.  
11 **Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.  
12 **Deletions to Codes** are in *strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*.  
13 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.  
14 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.  
15 **Asterisks (\* \* \* \*)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code  
16 subsections or parts of tables.

17 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

18

19 Section 1. The Health Code is hereby amended by adding Article 1E, consisting of  
20 Sections 1E.1 through 1E.9, to read as follows:

21

**ARTICLE 1E: SPAYING, NEUTERING, AND STERILIZING OF DOGS**

22

**SECTION 1E.1. FINDINGS.**

23 The City and County of San Francisco (“City”) is committed to compassionate care for its  
24 domestic and wild animals, including its large dog population. The City spends significant resources  
25 caring for unowned and unwanted dogs. Despite these efforts, the City is unable to find safe, nurturing

1 homes for all of its dogs. Requiring most dogs to be spayed, neutered, or sterilized will significantly  
2 reduce the population of homeless dogs entering the shelter, saving resources, as well as lowering  
3 euthanasia rates. Other benefits to spaying, neutering, or sterilizing dogs include a decreased risk of  
4 canine cancer and infections, fewer behavioral issues, and helping dogs to live longer and safer lives.

5  
6 **SECTION 1E.2. DEFINITION.**

7 For the purposes of Sections 1E.1 through 1E.9, inclusive, of this Article 1E, the following  
8 terms shall have the following meanings:

9 “Competition dog” means any dog who competes in events approved by a registry which  
10 require dogs to be intact, and meets one of the following requirements:

11 (1) Within the prior 365 days, the dog has competed in at least one competition  
12 approved by such a registry;

13 (2) The dog has earned a conformation, obedience, agility, carting, herding, protection,  
14 rally, sporting, working, or other title from a purebred dog registry; or

15 (3) The guardian of the dog is a member of a purebred dog breed club, approved by the  
16 Department, which enforces a code of ethics that includes restrictions on breeding dogs with genetic  
17 defects or life-threatening health problems.

18 “Department” means the Animal Care and Control Department.

19 “Director” means the Executive Director of the Department, or the Executive Director’s  
20 designee.

21 “Guardian” means an individual who owns, keeps, or harbors a dog.

22 “Registry” means the American Kennel Club (“AKC”), United Kennel Club (“UKC”),  
23 American Dog Breeders Association (“ADBA”), or other national registry approved by the  
24 Department.

1            “Unaltered dog” means a dog that has not undergone a spay (female) or neuter (male)  
2 procedure, which involves surgically removing the reproductive organs, or chemical sterilization.

3  
4            **SECTION 1E.3. MANDATORY SPAYING, NEUTERING, AND STERILIZING OF DOGS;**

5 **EXCEPTIONS.**

6            No person may own, keep, or harbor within the City any dog that the person knows, or should  
7 know, has not been spayed, neutered, or chemically sterilized, unless one of the following exceptions  
8 applies:

9            (a) The dog is under one year of age;

10           (b) A veterinarian certifies that the dog cannot be spayed, neutered, or chemically sterilized  
11 without a reasonable likelihood of suffering serious bodily harm or death due to age, illness, or other  
12 physical condition, and further determines the time frame, if any, after which the dog can be spayed,  
13 neutered, or chemically sterilized without there being a reasonable likelihood of suffering serious  
14 bodily harm or death. Within 30 days of owning, keeping, or harboring an unaltered dog, the guardian  
15 must submit the veterinarian’s certification and determination to the Department for verification; or

16           (c) The guardian has obtained an unaltered dog permit in accordance with Section 1E.4, or has  
17 submitted an application for an unaltered dog permit in accordance with Section 1E.4 which has not yet  
18 been decided by the Department.

19           This Section 1E.3 shall not be operative until the completion of 30 days following the effective  
20 date of the ordinance in Board of Supervisors File No. 251162, enacting this Section 1E.3.

21           **SECTION 1E.4. GRANTING AN UNALTERED DOG PERMIT.**

22           A guardian of an unaltered dog may obtain an unaltered dog permit, valid for one year, which  
23 is nontransferable both as to the permit holder and the dog. The permit may be obtained from the  
24 Department if all of the following conditions are met and none of the conditions described in Section  
25 1E.5(a) have occurred:

1           (a) The unaltered dog is one of the following:

2                   (1) A competition dog as defined in Section 1E.2; or

3                   (2) A dog who has been trained for law enforcement purposes and is used by a public  
4 law enforcement agency for law enforcement purposes; or

5                   (3) A dog who is not required to be spayed, neutered, or sterilized in accordance with  
6 Section 1E.3(a) and (b).

7           (b) The applicant has submitted to the Department the forms required by the Department, and  
8 has paid the required fee of \$186 for dogs under subsection (a)(1), and \$108 for dogs under  
9 subsections (a)(2) and (a)(3), of this Section 1E.4.

10  
11           **SECTION 1E.5. DENIAL OR REVOCATION OF PERMIT.**

12           (a) **Permit Denial or Revocation.** The Department may deny an application for, or revoke, an  
13 unaltered dog permit based on any one of the following:

14                   (1) The guardian of the unaltered dog is not in compliance with the provisions of  
15 Section 1E.4;

16                   (2) The Department has received at least one complaint, signed under penalty of  
17 perjury, stating that the guardian of an unaltered dog has allowed it to run loose or escape in a public  
18 area, or has neglected it or another animal;

19                   (3) The guardian of the unaltered dog has been cited for violating a State law or  
20 municipal code relating to the care and control of animals;

21                   (4) A court or an agency of appropriate jurisdiction has determined that the unaltered  
22 dog is a nuisance, or that the unaltered dog is a vicious and dangerous dog;

23                   (5) Another unaltered dog permit held by the guardian of an unaltered dog has been  
24 revoked;

1                   (6) An unaltered female dog has had more than one litter per year, or five or more  
2 litters in her lifetime; or

3                   (7) The permit application contains a material misrepresentation or omission of fact.

4                   (b) **Notice of Denial or Revocation.** Within 10 days of its decision to deny or revoke a permit  
5 under subsection (a), the Department shall send to the guardian a written notice, either by U.S. Mail or  
6 electronically, to the guardian of the Department's decision to deny or revoke the unaltered dog permit,  
7 stating the reasons for the denial or revocation, either by U.S. Mail or electronically.

8  
9                   **SECTION 1E.6. APPEAL FROM DENIAL OR REVOCATION OF PERMIT.**

10                   (a) **Request for Hearing.** Any person whose application is denied or whose permit is revoked  
11 may seek administrative review of the denial or revocation by filing an appeal in writing with the  
12 Director no later than 20 calendar days from the date of receiving the denial or revocation. An appeal  
13 shall be deemed filed on the date that the Director receives it.

14                   (b) **Hearing Procedures.**

15                   (1) The Director shall take the following actions within 10 days of receiving an appeal:  
16 (i) set a date for the hearing, which date shall be no less than 10 and no more than 30 days from the  
17 date that the appeal was filed, and (ii) send written notice of the hearing date to the appellant and the  
18 Department, either by U.S. Mail or electronically.

19                   (2) The hearing shall not be conducted according to technical rules of evidence. Any  
20 relevant evidence is admissible if it is the sort of evidence on which responsible persons are  
21 accustomed to rely in the conduct of serious affairs. The Director may, in the Director's discretion,  
22 require testimony under oath.

23                   (3) The appellant and the Department shall be given the opportunity to present evidence  
24 concerning the denial or revocation.

1           (c) **Decision.** Upon completion of the hearing, the Director may uphold or reverse the decision  
2 being appealed. The Director shall render a decision in writing within 30 days of the hearing. The  
3 Director shall serve the decision on the appellant and the Department within 10 days of the issuance of  
4 the decision, either by U.S. Mail or electronically.

5           (d) **Failure to appear.** If the appellant fails to appear at the hearing, the Director shall  
6 confirm that notice of the hearing was properly provided under subsection (b) and the decision shall be  
7 effective immediately.

8  
9           **SECTION 1E.7. TRANSFER, SALE, AND BREEDING OF UNALTERED DOGS.**

10           (a) Any person who offers to transfer, sell, or breed an unaltered dog within the City must  
11 include a valid unaltered dog permit. “Transfer” in this Section 1E.1.7 includes, but is not limited to  
12 gifting, re-homing, or adopting. “Breed” in this subsection (a) means the practice of mating selected  
13 dogs with the intention of maintaining or producing specific qualities and characteristics.

14           (b) Within 10 days after the transfer within the City of any unaltered dog that is one year of age  
15 or older, the guardian of an unaltered dog must notify the Department of the name and address of the  
16 transferee. The permit and microchip numbers, if any, of the unaltered dog must appear in a document  
17 transferring the dog to the new guardian.

18           (c) Within 30 days after a litter is born to a dog, the guardian of the dog must advise the  
19 Department in writing of the number of live born puppies. When a puppy younger than one year old is  
20 sold or otherwise transferred to another person within the City, the guardian must advise the  
21 Department of the name and address of the transferee and the microchip number of the puppy, if  
22 applicable, within 10 days of the transfer.

23           (d) This Section 1E.7 shall not be operative until the completion of 30 days following the  
24 effective date of the ordinance in Board of Supervisors File No. 251162, enacting this Section 1E.7.

1           **SECTION 1E.8. PENALTIES.**

2           Any person violating the provisions of Sections 1E.3 through 1E.5, inclusive, of this Article 1E  
3 are subject to the following penalties:

4           (a) A first violation may result in the Department impounding the unaltered dog and disposing  
5 of the unaltered dog in accordance with Sections 41.7(a) and 41.9 of the Health Code. A first violation  
6 shall be an infraction punishable by a fine not to exceed \$250. The guardian of the unaltered dog may  
7 reclaim the dog from the Department, in addition to paying the other charges and fees set out in  
8 Section 41.10 of the Health Code, provided that the guardian complies with Section 1E.9, below.

9           (b) A second violation committed within 5 years of the first violation shall be a misdemeanor  
10 punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000 or by imprisonment in the County Jail for a period not to  
11 exceed six months, or by both such fine and imprisonment. In addition, a second violation may result in  
12 the Department impounding the unaltered dog and disposing of the unaltered dog in accordance with  
13 Sections 41.7(a) and 41.9 of the Health Code. The guardian of the unaltered dog may reclaim the dog  
14 from the Department, in addition to paying the other charges and fees set out in Section 41.10 of the  
15 Health Code, provided that the guardian complies with Section 1E.9, below.

16  
17           **SECTION 1E.9. IMPOUNDMENT OF UNALTERED DOGS.**

18           The guardian of an impounded unaltered dog may reclaim the unaltered dog if:

19           (a) The dog is spayed, neutered, or sterilized by a Department veterinarian at the guardian's  
20 expense. There may be additional fees to be paid by the guardian for any extraordinary care provided;  
21 or

22           (b) The dog is spayed, neutered, or sterilized by a Department-approved veterinarian at the  
23 guardian's expense. The guardian shall pay the Department's costs to deliver the unaltered dog to the  
24 guardian's chosen veterinarian. The veterinarian must sign and return a certificate of completion to  
25

1 the Department within 10 days after the procedure. The veterinarian shall release the dog to the  
2 guardian only after the spay, neuter, or sterilization procedure is complete; or

3 (c) At the discretion of the Department, the guardian agrees to have the unaltered dog spayed,  
4 neutered, or sterilized and to submit a certificate of completion signed by a licensed veterinarian within  
5 10 days of the procedure.

6  
7 Section 3. Article 1 of the Health Code is hereby amended by deleting Sections 43  
8 through 43.4, as follows:

9 **~~SEC. 43. DEFINITION OF PIT BULL.~~**

10 ~~—(a) Definition. For the purposes of this Article, the word "pit bull" includes any dog that is~~  
11 ~~an American Pit Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, or any dog~~  
12 ~~displaying the physical traits of any one or more of the above breeds, or any dog exhibiting those~~  
13 ~~distinguishing characteristics that conform to the standards established by the American Kennel Club~~  
14 ~~("AKC") or United Kennel Club ("UKC") for any of the above breeds. The AKC and UKC standards~~  
15 ~~for the above breeds are listed on their websites as well as online through the Animal Care and Control~~  
16 ~~Department's ("Department") website.~~

17 ~~—(b) Determination of Breed. If an owner, guardian or keeper is unsure as to whether or not~~  
18 ~~his/her unspayed and unneutered dog is a pit bull, s/he may make an appointment with the Department~~  
19 ~~at which a Department staff member shall make a determination as to whether or not the dog is a pit~~  
20 ~~bull. If the dog owner, guardian or keeper wishes to appeal the determination that the dog is a pit bull,~~  
21 ~~within five business days of the staff member's determination s/he may request a hearing before the~~  
22 ~~Department's Director or his/her designee. The hearing shall be held no more than 30 days after the~~  
23 ~~Director receives the request. The hearing may be informal and rules of evidence not strictly observed.~~  
24 ~~The decision of the Director or his/her designee is final.~~

25 **~~SEC. 43.1. MANDATORY SPAYING AND NEUTERING OF PIT BULLS; EXCEPTIONS.~~**

1           ~~—No person may own, keep, or harbor any dog within the City and County of San Francisco~~  
2 ~~that the person in possession knew, or should have known, was a pit bull that has not been spayed or~~  
3 ~~neutered unless:~~

4           ~~—(a) The pit bull is under eight weeks of age;~~

5           ~~—(b) The pit bull cannot be spayed or neutered without a high likelihood of suffering serious~~  
6 ~~bodily harm or death due to a physical abnormality. A veterinarian must certify such a condition,~~  
7 ~~determine the time frame after which the pit bull can be spayed/neutered. Within 30 days of the~~  
8 ~~operative date of this ordinance, or within 30 days of, taking possession or ownership of an unspayed~~  
9 ~~or unneutered pit bull, the owner, guardian or keeper must submit such documentation to be verified by~~  
10 ~~the Department;~~

11           ~~—(c) The pit bull has been present in the City and County of San Francisco for less than thirty~~  
12 ~~days;~~

13           ~~—(d) The owner, guardian or keeper has obtained, or has submitted an application for a~~  
14 ~~breeding permit in accordance with Section 44 et seq. of the San Francisco Health Code;~~

15           ~~—(e) Determination of breed is under appeal pursuant to Section 43(b) above; or~~

16           ~~—(f) The pit bull is a show dog. Within 30 days of the operative date of this ordinance, or~~  
17 ~~within 30 days of taking possession or ownership of an unspayed or unneutered pit bull, the owner,~~  
18 ~~guardian or keeper must submit a copy of the organization papers (AKC or UKC) to the Department of~~  
19 ~~Animal Care and Control demonstrating the pedigree information and show dog registration and that~~  
20 ~~the dog conforms with the same breeding permit guidelines set forth in Sections 44.1(a)(3)(A),~~  
21 ~~44.1(a)(3)(B), 44.1(a)(3)(C) and 44.1(a)(3)(D).~~

22           ***SEC. 43.2. PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO SPAY OR NEUTER PIT BULL.***

23           ~~—Violation of Section 43.1 may result in the following penalties:~~

24           ~~—(a) A first violation may result in the Department impounding the pit bull and disposing of~~  
25 ~~the pit bull in accordance with Sections 41.7(a) and 41.9 of the San Francisco Health Code. A first~~

1 violation shall be an infraction punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500. In order for the owner,  
2 guardian or keeper to reclaim the pit bull from the Department, in addition to paying the other charges  
3 and fees set out in Section 41.10, one of the following must occur:

4 — (1) ~~The Department shall have a veterinarian spay or neuter the dog. The dog owner,  
5 guardian or keeper shall pay a deposit of \$100 prior to the procedure and will be charged the fee for  
6 such services consisting of the actual expense incurred as established by the Department. There may be  
7 additional fees for any extraordinary care provided.~~

8 — (2) ~~In the alternative, the owner, guardian or keeper shall arrange for another veterinarian  
9 within the City and County of San Francisco to spay or neuter and shall pay the Department a fee of  
10 \$60, which shall cover the Department's costs of delivering the dog to a vet of the owner, guardian or  
11 keeper's choosing. The Department shall deliver the dog to the vet, and the vet shall release the dog to  
12 the owner, guardian or keeper only after the spaying or neutering is complete.~~

13 — (3) ~~At the discretion of the Director, or his/her designee, the Director may release the dog  
14 to the owner, guardian or keeper provided that the owner, guardian or keeper signs an affidavit that  
15 s/he will have the dog spayed or neutered within two weeks and will provide documentation verifying  
16 that the spaying or neutering occurred upon completion. If the owner, guardian or keeper fails to have  
17 his/her pit bull spayed or neutered as agreed in the affidavit, the Department shall have the authority to  
18 impound the dog, and the owner, guardian or keeper may be charged with a second violation under  
19 43.2(b), below.~~

20 — (4) ~~In the event that the Director or his/her designee determines that payment of any fees  
21 by the owner, guardian or keeper of a pit bull which is impounded or otherwise taken into custody  
22 would cause extreme financial difficulty to the owner, guardian or keeper, the Director or his/her  
23 designee may, at his/her discretion, waive all or part of the fees necessary for compliance with this  
24 section.~~

1           ~~—(b) A second violation of this section by the owner, guardian or keeper, shall be a~~  
2 ~~misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in the County Jail for a period not to exceed six months or~~  
3 ~~by a fine not to exceed \$1,000, or by both such fine and imprisonment. In addition, a second violation~~  
4 ~~may result in the Department impounding the pit bull and disposing of the pit bull in accordance with~~  
5 ~~Sections 41.7(a) and 41.9 of the San Francisco Health Code. Further, the provisions of Section~~  
6 ~~43.2(a)(1) above may apply.~~

7           ~~**SEC. 43.3. ALLOCATION OF FEES AND FINES COLLECTED.**~~

8           ~~—All fees and the City's share of all fines collected under Section 43.2 shall be used only by the~~  
9 ~~Animal Care and Control Department to fund the implementation and enforcement of the pit bull~~  
10 ~~spaying/neutering program.~~

11           ~~**SEC. 43.4. OPERATIVE DATE.**~~

12           ~~—Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 43.1, the provisions of this Section mandating the~~  
13 ~~spaying and neutering of pit bulls shall not be operative until the first date that California Health and~~  
14 ~~Safety Code Section 122331 is in full force and effect or upon the effective date of this ordinance,~~  
15 ~~whichever is later.~~

16  
17           Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after  
18 enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the  
19 ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board  
20 of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.



## LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Health Code - Spaying, Neutering, and Sterilizing of Dogs]

**Ordinance amending the Health Code to require that every dog in San Francisco, with certain exceptions, be spayed, neutered, or chemically sterilized, rather than requiring such procedures only for pit bulls; to establish a process and fee for applying for an unaltered dog permit, and a process for granting, denying, or revoking such permit, with a hearing following a denial or revocation; to regulate the transfer, sale, and breeding of unaltered dogs; and to establish penalties and conditions of impoundment for violations of the mandatory spay, neuter, or chemical sterilization requirements.**

### Existing Law

Existing law requires all pit bulls in the City and County of San Francisco to be spayed or neutered, with limited exceptions. Violations are subject to fines of \$100-1,000. Existing law also provides a permit process for granting or denying pit bull breeding permits, regulates breeding of pit pulls, requires reporting of pit bull litters, and mandates posting of permit numbers.

### Amendments to Current Law

The proposed ordinance would repeal the provisions requiring pit bulls to be spayed or neutered, and add provisions requiring every dog in San Francisco, with certain exceptions, be spayed, neutered, or chemically sterilized, rather than requiring such procedures only for pit bulls. Exceptions would include dogs under one year of age, cases where a veterinarian certifies that spaying, neutering, or sterilizing would likely cause serious bodily harm or death, or situations where the guardian has obtained an unaltered dog permit from the Animal Care and Control (ACC).

The proposed ordinance would establish the conditions under which a guardian may obtain an unaltered dog permit from ACC, along with a process and fee for applying for one. It would also set out procedures for granting, denying, or revoking permits, including a hearing process conducted by the Director of ACC following a denial or revocation.

Additionally, the proposed ordinance would regulate the transfer, sale and breeding of unaltered dogs, and would establish penalties for violations ranging from an infraction and \$250 fine for the first violation, to a misdemeanor and a \$1,000 fine for a second violation. The proposed ordinance would also authorize ACC to impound unaltered dogs.



**MEMORANDUM**

To: Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

From: Sophie Hayward  
Director of Legislation and Public Affairs, Office of the City Administrator

Re: Legislative Introduction

CC: Virginia Donohue  
Executive Director, San Francisco Animal Care and Control

Date: November 17, 2025

Attached, please find an ordinance authorizing San Francisco Animal Care and Control to amend the Health Code to require that every dog in San Francisco be spayed, neutered, or chemically sterilized. This ordinance also outlines exemptions under specified circumstances. We would like to introduce this item at the December 2, 2025 Board meeting.

The following documents are included:

- Cover Letter
- Legislative Digest
- Proposed Ordinance
- Proposed Ordinance in a Word Document

Please contact Amy Corso, Deputy Director, San Francisco Animal Care and Control, at [amy.corso@sfgov.org](mailto:amy.corso@sfgov.org) with any questions.

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244  
San Francisco 94102-4689  
Tel. No. (415) 554-5184  
Fax No. (415) 554-5163  
TDD/TTY No. (415) 554-5227

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Virginia Donohue, Director, Animal Care and Control

FROM: Monique Crayton, Assistant Clerk, Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee, Board of Supervisors

DATE: December 9, 2025

SUBJECT: LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

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The Board of Supervisors' Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee has received the following ordinance request, introduced on December 2, 2025:

**File No. 251162**

**[Health Code - Spaying, Neutering, and Sterilizing of Dogs]**

**Ordinance amending the Health Code to require that every dog in San Francisco, with certain exceptions, be spayed, neutered, or chemically sterilized, rather than requiring such procedures only for pit bulls; to establish a process and fee for applying for an unaltered dog permit, and a process for granting, denying, or revoking such permit, with a hearing following a denial or revocation; to regulate the transfer, sale, and breeding of unaltered dogs; and to establish penalties and conditions of impoundment for violations of the mandatory spay, neuter, or chemical sterilization requirements.**

If you have any comments or reports to be included with the file, please forward them to me at the Board of Supervisors, City Hall, Room 244, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102.

CC:  
Office of Chair Dorsey



## Commission of Animal Control & Welfare

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### Commissioners

**Michael Angelo Torres**

Chairperson

**Irina Ozernoy**

Vice-Chair

**Mikaila Garfinkel**

Secretary

**Nick Chapman**

Commissioner

**Michael Reed**

Commissioner

**Dayna Sherwood**

Commissioner

### Department Representatives

**Amy Corso**

San Francisco Department of Animal  
Care and Control

**George Han, MD, MPH**

San Francisco Department of Public  
Health

**Gregory Sutherland**

San Francisco Police Department

**Christopher Campbell**

San Francisco Recreation and Park  
Department

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January 10, 2026

City Administrator Carmen Chu  
San Francisco City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 362  
San Francisco, CA 94102

### Re: Recommendation in Support of Proposed Mandatory Spay/Neuter Legislation

Dear City Administrator Chu,

As part of its responsibility to advise the Office of the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, and the Office of the City Administrator on matters related to animal welfare, the San Francisco Animal Commission submits this letter in support of the proposed mandatory spay/neuter policy changes put forward by San Francisco Animal Care and Control (SF ACC).

Under the proposed mandatory spay/neuter legislation, all dogs one year of age or older would be required to be spayed or neutered (except for a few clearly defined exceptions). The legislation would also replace San Francisco's current breed-specific mandatory spay/neuter requirement for pit bulls, thereby establishing a more equitable, breed-neutral policy.

San Francisco is currently facing significant post-pandemic challenges related to animal homelessness, particularly among dogs. SF ACC has reported a sustained increase in shelter intake, including a sharp rise in puppies entering the system. In Fiscal Year 2019, SF ACC took in 2,643 dogs and placed 2,129. In the most recent fiscal year, intake increased by over 20% to 3,179 dogs, but only 2,355 placements. Puppy intake alone rose from 243 in FY2020 to 470 last year. These trends underscore the urgent need for proactive, preventative policy measures.

This legislative change is modeled after a program implemented by Los Angeles County in 2006, which has demonstrated measurable success. Since the adoption of its mandatory spay/neuter law, Los Angeles County reduced its annual dog intake from approximately 90,000 dogs per year to roughly 34,000 dogs per year. Aligning San Francisco's policy framework with this proven approach represents an innovative step toward improved animal well-being outcomes.

This proposed legislation is strategically designed to reduce the number of dogs entering San Francisco's shelter system, thereby decreasing the likelihood of prolonged shelter stays and euthanasia when placement cannot be found. The Commission recognizes that no one wants dogs to



## **Commission of Animal Control & Welfare**

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experience homelessness or to be euthanized, and that as a community, we share responsibility for preventing these outcomes.

It is also worth noting that California state law already requires all dogs adopted from shelters to be spayed or neutered. The proposed legislation extends this preventative framework beyond the shelter system, addressing the upstream causes of animal overpopulation. Enforcement would be complaint or report-based, further ensuring that implementation remains reasonable and targeted.

Based on the data presented by SF ACC, the demonstrated success of similar legislation in other jurisdictions, and the shared goal of reducing animal homelessness and euthanasia, the San Francisco Animal Commission strongly recommends adoption of the proposed mandatory spay/neuter legislation.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

Michael Angelo Torres  
Chair, San Francisco Animal Commission – Commission of Animal Control  
and Welfare

San Francisco City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Rm 362  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

Phone: (415) 554-6074  
Email: [michaelangelo.torres@sfdph.org](mailto:michaelangelo.torres@sfdph.org)

**From:** [Michael Nulty](#)  
**To:** [Dorsey, Matt \(BOS\)](#); [Mahmood, Bilal \(BOS\)](#); [Wong, Alan \(BOS\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#); [Abd6membership](#)  
**Subject:** 251162 Health Code - Spaying, Neutering, and Sterilizing of Dogs  
**Date:** Saturday, March 7, 2026 2:20:43 PM

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This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Honorable Members of the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee,

The Alliance for a Better District 6 strongly supports the proposed mandatory spay/neuter legislation introduced by San Francisco Animal Care and Control (SF ACC). This breed-neutral policy would require all dogs one year of age or older to be spayed or neutered, with clearly defined exceptions, while eliminating the current breed-specific requirement for pit bulls. We believe this change promotes equity, animal welfare, and effective management of our city's animal homelessness crisis.

As highlighted in the San Francisco Animal Commission's recent letter of support to City Administrator Chu, San Francisco faces ongoing post-pandemic challenges with elevated dog intakes and placements at SF ACC. Intake rose over 20% in recent years, with puppy intake nearly doubling in some periods, straining resources and increasing risks of prolonged shelter stays or euthanasia. This legislation addresses root causes by extending preventative measures beyond shelter adoptions—where spay/neuter is already mandated under California state law—to the broader pet population through a complaint-based enforcement approach that remains reasonable and targeted.

The proposal draws inspiration from Los Angeles County's successful 2006 mandatory spay/neuter ordinance, which significantly reduced annual dog intake from around 90,000 to approximately 34,000. Several other California jurisdictions have adopted similar mandatory spay/neuter policies for dogs (and often cats), demonstrating a broader trend toward proactive, breed-neutral approaches to curb overpopulation. These include:

- Long Beach (requiring dogs over 6 months to be spayed/neutered, with exemptions for medical, show, service, and certain grandfathered animals)
- Lake Elsinore (mandating spay/neuter for dogs and cats over 4 months, paired with microchipping)
- Menifee (requiring spay/neuter or an unaltered dog license/permit for dogs)

- Bakersfield (implementing mandatory spay/neuter programs with certification options)
- Moreno Valley (along with nearby cities like Riverside and San Bernardino, enforcing mandatory ordinances)

Many cities in Los Angeles County have also aligned with the county's ordinance for dogs and cats over 4 months. Santa Cruz County has maintained a longstanding mandatory policy since 1995 for animals over 6 months (with unaltered certificates available). These examples illustrate that mandatory, equitable spay/neuter requirements—when paired with exemptions, education, and accessible services—can yield positive outcomes in reducing shelter burdens and euthanasia rates.

The Alliance for a Better District 6 urges the Committee to advance this legislation. By adopting a proven, fair, and comprehensive policy, San Francisco can lead in preventing animal homelessness, improving community safety and neighborhood well-being, and upholding our shared responsibility to protect vulnerable animals.

Sincerely,

Michael Nulty  
Executive Director  
Alliance for a Better District 6

***Michael Nulty***

P.O. Box 420782  
San Francisco, CA 94142-0782  
(415) 339-8327 - Direct  
(415) 339-8779 - Alliance for a Better District 6  
(415) 339-8683 - Central City Democrats  
(415) 937-1289 - North of Market Business Association  
(415) 820-1412 - Tenderloin Futures Collaborative  
<http://abd6.cfsites.org/>

**From:** [Project Open Paw](#)  
**To:** [Dorsey, Matt \(BOS\)](#); [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Chok, Liam \(ADM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed spay/neuter mandate  
**Date:** Thursday, March 12, 2026 12:33:58 PM

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Mr. Dorsey, I am Paul Crowell, founder and president of Project Open Paw, a charity organization here in SF that benefits pets belonging to unhoused folks.. Over my 10 years of service in The City I have witnessed the mass breeding of puppies in this community on a scale that is disturbing.. Spay and Neuter is highly frowned upon in the culture of this community, to the point of it being almost a taboo subject, for various reasons, none of which seem to be to the benefit of the voiceless dogs forced to provide litter after litter for sale or trade, or to be given to other homeless individuals to land in less than ideal lives and continue the cycle of unchecked breeding... The proposed measure from SFACC concerning mandatory spay/neuter for dogs 1 year old and older could make a foreseeable positive difference in curbing some of this unethical business on our streets and benefit it's innocent animal victims immeasurably.. I most certainly endorse passing this legislation for the greater good of animals and our city alike.. Thank you so much for your consideration... Best, Paul  
Crowell Project Open Paw

**From:** [Noah Price](#)  
**To:** [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Ordinance (File #251162) to amend the health code, requiring all dogs over a certain age to be spayed, neutered  
**Date:** Monday, March 16, 2026 2:16:51 PM

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March 16, 2026

Monique Crayton, Committee Clerk  
San Francisco Public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244,  
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Ordinance (File #251162) to amend the health code, requiring all dogs over a certain age to be spayed, neutered

Dear Monique Crayton, Committee Clerk:

My name is Noah Price, and I am a long-time San Francisco resident and dog owner. I am testifying today in opposition to the proposed mandatory spay/neuter ordinance for all dogs.

I support reducing shelter intake and euthanasia, but a one-size-fits-all surgical mandate ignores the evolving veterinary science on reproductive hormones and long-term health. Recent reviews and cohort studies show that the health impacts of gonad removal are complex and highly individual, varying by breed, sex, and age at surgery (Arroube & Pereira, 2025).

First, there is growing evidence that keeping a dog intact, or at least delaying sterilization, can reduce the risk of certain orthopedic problems. Large cohort work in popular breeds like Labradors and Golden Retrievers has shown that early neutering (especially before 12 months) is associated with significantly higher rates of hip dysplasia, cranial cruciate ligament tears, and elbow dysplasia compared with intact dogs, sometimes increasing joint disorders four- to five-fold. These joint diseases are painful, expensive to treat, and can permanently reduce mobility and quality of life (Hart, Hart, [et.al](#) 2014).

Second, several studies suggest that lifetime exposure to natural hormones may be protective against some cancers and other chronic conditions. A long-term database analysis of tens of thousands of dogs found that sterilized dogs had higher odds of dying from certain cancers and autoimmune diseases, while intact dogs were relatively less likely to die from these causes. More recent work on hormone-sparing approaches, such as vasectomy or ovary-sparing spay, has found that dogs with longer exposure to their natural hormones had reduced odds of a range of health problems and nuisance behaviors and lived longer than those who had their gonads removed early in life. In other words, completely removing hormones is

not the only way to be a responsible owner and may in some cases trade one set of health risks for another (Hoffman, Creevy, et. al 2013).

Third, major evidence reviews now emphasize that the risks and benefits of neutering are not uniform and that decisions should be made case-by-case between an owner and their veterinarian, considering breed, size, intended activity, and individual medical history. For some dogs, especially small mixed breeds, early spay/neuter may be appropriate. For others, particularly large or athletic dogs, the best choice for long-term joint and cancer risk may be to remain intact longer, use a hormone-sparing procedure, or time surgery later in life. A blanket legal mandate removes that nuance and forces owners and vets to follow the law rather than the science for the individual dog in front of them (Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, 2026).

This ordinance also risks unintended welfare consequences. Owners who are wary of the health trade-offs or cannot obtain timely surgery may avoid licensing, delay vet visits, or even relinquish dogs rather than comply, undermining the goals of responsible ownership and good veterinary oversight. More effective and less intrusive alternatives exist, such as targeted low-cost or free sterilization programs in high-intake neighborhoods, voluntary age- and breed-specific guidelines, education about accidental litters, and support for hormone-sparing sterilization options that prevent reproduction without removing the health benefits of natural hormones.

As a responsible pet owner, I want to work with my veterinarian to choose the approach that best balances my dog's individual cancer, orthopedic, and behavioral risks—not be compelled by law into a surgery that may increase certain serious health problems. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to reject this ordinance in its current mandatory form and instead pursue evidence-based, community-supported strategies that reduce shelter intake without sacrificing canine health and owner autonomy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Noah Price  
218 Cambridge Street  
San Francisco, CA 94134

## References

Arroube, A., & Pereira, A. F. (2025). Dog Neuter, Yes or No? A Summary of the Motivations, Benefits, and Harms, with Special Emphasis on the Behavioral Aspect. *Animals: an open access journal from MDPI*, 15(7), 1063. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani15071063>

Hart, B. L., Hart, L. A., Thigpen, A. P., & Willits, N. H. (2014). Long-term health effects of neutering dogs: Comparison of Labrador Retrievers with Golden Retrievers. *PLOS ONE*, 9(7), Article e102241. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102241>

Hoffman, J. M., Creevy, K. E., & Promislow, D. E. (2013). Reproductive capability is

associated with lifespan and cause of death in companion dogs. PloS one, 8(4), e61082.  
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0061082>

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Knowledge. (2026, February 19). Benefits and risks of neutering pets – What is the evidence?  
<https://www.rcvsknowledge.org/resource/benefits-and-risks-of-neutering-pets-what-is-the-evidence/>



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**Fw: Proposed Spay Neuter Legislation in San Francisco**

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**From** Chok, Liam (ADM) <Liam.Chok@sfgov.org>

**Date** Mon 3/16/2026 9:07 AM

**To** Chok, Liam (ADM) <Liam.Chok@sfgov.org>

**From:** NorCal Bully Breed Rescue <norcalbullybreedrescue@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Sunday, March 15, 2026 4:07 PM

**To:** Jones, Kathryn (ADM) <kathryn.jones@sfgov.org>

**Subject:** Re: Proposed Spay Neuter Legislation in San Francisco

Dear Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors,

NorCal Bully Breed Rescue submits this letter to express our strong support for proposed legislation that would require the mandatory spaying and neutering of all dogs, with limited exceptions, over one year of age in San Francisco. As a member of the local dog rescue community, we have witnessed firsthand the overwhelming impact that shelter overcrowding has on the ability of rescues and shelters to keep up with the needs of the dogs who have been discarded, abused, or forgotten by the humans that once cared for them.

Currently, the City's spay and neuter requirements are breed-specific, applying only to pit bull-type dogs. The current legislation, unanimously approved by the Board in 2005, does not go quite far enough to address the larger issue of canine overpopulation across all breeds. We hope that the current Board sees the benefits of applying the same principles to all breeds that have been deemed appropriate for pit bull-type breeds for the past two decades.

Our rescue focuses primarily on bully breeds, and we have seen a recent dramatic increase in the number of backyard breeders who have taken the opportunity to make money off the sale of "trendy" breeds such as French Bulldogs. The popularity of the breed has resulted in an unprecedented proliferation of French Bulldogs in shelters and rescues. Our foster-based rescue has seen such a huge influx of French Bulldogs in the past five years that we often cannot find enough foster homes for them and have to turn down our shelter partners' requests for help with alleviating their overcrowding.

By expanding the focus of the existing legislation from only pit bull-type dogs to all breeds, this spay/neuter legislation will help to curb irresponsible backyard breeding. Additionally, the legislation will limit the number of litters that legitimate breeders can legally produce, which will reduce the number of French Bulldogs and other trendy breeds that end up being dumped or surrendered to shelters.

Overcrowded shelters struggle to provide adequate space, medical care, and attention to every animal. The shelters rely on their rescue partners to help with the overcrowding by taking dogs into rescue. However, the number of dogs that rescues like ours can support has also been pushed to the limit by

the multitude of dogs finding themselves in shelters right now. This results in a tragic number of dogs being euthanized simply because there are not enough resources or space to care for them all.

By mandating spaying and neutering for all dogs, regardless of breed, San Francisco can take a significant step toward reducing shelter overpopulation and improving outcomes for animals citywide. This legislation would enhance the well-being of the community's pets, support the efforts of local rescues and shelters, and help ensure that no healthy, adoptable dog loses its life simply because there was no room left.

We urge you to support this important measure and help make San Francisco a more humane city for all dogs.

With best regards,

**Leslie Bird**  
**Co-Founder/Executive Director**  
**NorCal Bully Breed Rescue**





**To:** Committee Chair Matt Dorsey and Clerk Monique Crayton

**From:** Jill Leiva, Senior Director, Copper's Dream Rescue

**Date:** March 21, 2026

**Subject:** Support for Proposed Mandatory Spay/Neuter Ordinance for SF

Dear Board of Supervisors, Council Members and SF Community,

I am writing on behalf of Copper's Dream Rescue to express our support for the proposed mandatory spay and neuter ordinance for dogs over one year of age. Both private rescues and municipal shelters have been operating far beyond capacity for far too long and something needs to be done.

The number of unwanted litters has increased dramatically over the last five years, creating an uphill battle that no shelter can simply 'adopt' its way out of. This crisis must be addressed at the source with unregulated and unethical breeding of dogs.

As a dedicated partner to San Francisco Animal Care & Control (SFACC) since 2008, we have witnessed the pet overpopulation crisis reach a breaking point. In the last three years alone, we have more than doubled our transfer intake from the city shelter. The most urgent generally include large, unplanned litters surrendered by overwhelmed owners, bottle babies requiring around the clock care and nursing moms which require long term placement.

As a foster-based rescue, these transfers consume a disproportionate share of our resources. Aside from the financial burden side of it, these rescues require an 8-week (or longer) commitment from our foster families. This cycle is unsustainable and not something we can adopt ourselves out of. We have to stop it at the source. When small rescues like ours are too full to help, the city's entire safety net fails. Please pass the mandatory spay and neuter law to help us in working towards solving this crisis.

Sincerely,

Jill Leiva, Senior Director

Copper's Dream Rescue

**From:** [Casa de Love Animal Rescue](#)  
**To:** [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Mandatory Spay/Neuter Legislation  
**Date:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 12:35:39 PM

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San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Pl  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Chair Dorsey and Members of the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Casa de Love Animal Rescue to express our strong support for the proposed mandatory spay/neuter legislation introduced by San Francisco Animal Care and Control (ACC).

This policy is extremely time-sensitive and urgently needed to protect the welfare of dogs in San Francisco. Since the pandemic, ACC has faced a sustained rise in dog intake which has contributed to overcrowding and placed significant strain on the City's only open-admission shelter. These trends show no signs of reversing on their own and highlight the need for proactive action now.

ACC is uniquely responsible for accepting all animals in San Francisco, regardless of species, medical condition, age, or temperament. This essential public service function makes population management especially challenging when intake rises faster than resources or community placements. Although ACC has implemented numerous programs, such as free vaccination clinics, spay/neuter fee waivers, and pet food banks, these measures have not produced the necessary reduction in stray dog intake. The continued increase in unplanned litters and stray animals makes it clear that additional tools are needed to address the root causes of overpopulation.

The proposed mandatory spay/neuter ordinance provides humane approach to preventing unnecessary breeding and reducing the number of dogs entering the shelter system. California law already requires that shelters spay or neuter animals before adoption. Extending this principle to the broader community is a practical, equitable, and humane next step—one that aligns with the City's broader goals of minimizing animal homelessness and ensuring that public resources are used effectively.

Implementing this policy now can help stabilize intake, reduce crowding, shorten shelter stays, and prevent euthanasia when homes cannot be found. It is a necessary step for San Francisco

to address the post pandemic increases in stray and unaltered dogs and to maintain humane conditions for all animals in the City's care.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Board to adopt the proposed mandatory spay/neuter ordinance to improve outcomes for dogs and strengthen the City's animal welfare infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lindy Turner

President

Casa de Love Animal Rescue

**From:** [Gail MacGowan](#)  
**To:** [DorseyStaff \(BOS\)](#); [MahmoodStaff](#); [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#); [WongStaff \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Ordinance to spay/neuter most dogs in S.F.  
**Date:** Sunday, March 29, 2026 12:27:23 PM

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I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed ordinance (File No. 251162) that would institute mandatory spay/neuter for nearly all dogs in San Francisco, as well as add the word "guardian" to law – potentially changing the legal status of animals in the city.

This proposal does not address the stray population, which is the primary driver of shelter overcrowding. A better solution is to fully fund low-cost spay/neuter programs and ensure the public is aware of available services.

I am not a dog owner, or "guardian," but I am a San Francisco resident who feels that this proposed ordinance is a massive overreach of government into the lives of those whom it represents.

Gail MacGowan  
2645 Sacramento St., Apt. 1A  
SF 94115



Atlanta, GA · Bentonville, AR · Houston, TX · Kanab, UT · Los Angeles, CA · New York City, NY · Salt Lake City, UT

March 24, 2026

Re: Mandatory Spay/Neuter Ordinance

Dear Chairman Dorsey and Committee Members-

Best Friends Animal Society is a leading animal welfare organization dedicated to saving the lives of dogs and cats in America's shelters by implementing data proven programs that work across the country. Founded in 1984, Best Friends runs lifesaving facilities and programs nationwide in partnership with more than 5,000 shelters and rescue organizations. From our headquarters in Kanab, Utah, we also operate the nation's largest no-kill animal sanctuary — a destination that brings our mission to life for thousands of visitors each year. We maintain the most comprehensive animal sheltering data in the country and make it accessible to the public — empowering communities with critical insights into the needs of their local shelters and how they can help.

Best Friends does not support any form of mandatory spay and neuter law, regulation, or policy, including any provision that targets a specific breed. While often well intentioned, these types of laws are the wrong policy solution, and while we certainly agree that increasing the numbers of sterilized cats and dogs is a crucial component to ending unnecessary killing, these efforts should never be codified as a mandate.

Research has consistently found that most pet owners want to get their pets sterilized. What the same research has also found is that the lack of available low-cost or free spay and neuter services is the primary barrier for these owners (though certainly there are other interconnected factors such as transportation, limited capacity at sterilization clinics and the hours of available service). These barriers should be removed, and Best Friends is committed to being a part of that solution. In fact, we operate and/or support spay and neuter clinics across the country to help serve pet owners, and we have consistently found that demand for these services far outweighs supply. We will continue to work toward expanding access to these critically needed services.

Given what we know about the public's desire to sterilize their pets, the result of mandatory spay/neuter laws is often that they punish the most underserved and under resourced pet owners in a community. Removing pets from loving families because they are unable to access veterinary services is never the appropriate solution. What is more, these laws can perversely increase the number of animals entering and dying in our shelters, as owned, loved pets are seized and impounded for noncompliance or because families cannot afford the fines levied against them. That is exactly the wrong approach to building a safe and humane community, and it only serves to divide the animal welfare community and law enforcement from the public. What is more, thousands of communities across the country have achieved a lifesaving rate of 90% or higher without any form of mandatory spay or neuter law or policy.

We strongly believe that bridges within our community should be built and strengthened. Unfunded mandates like these laws destroy the goodwill and trust that shelters and animal control have worked for decades to foster. If we criminalize under resourced, underserved, and



Atlanta, GA · Bentonville, AR · Houston, TX · Kanab, UT · Los Angeles, CA · New York City, NY · Salt Lake City, UT

underprivileged communities, we add unnecessary barriers to reaching our goal of a no-kill nation.

Finally, in communities that have enacted these types of laws, there is no credible research to show that mandatory spay and neuter is responsible for any decrease in shelter intake numbers. What is more, given the research definitively showing that owners overwhelmingly want to sterilize their pets, if these laws are coupled with increased funding for veterinary services, there really is no reason to impose a mandate in the first place. Instead, our communities should strive to increase access to spay/neuter services and other veterinary resources; this is the proven method to increase lifesaving rates.

In addition, below are my specific issues with the ordinance that go beyond the basic policy opposition to mandatory S/N we have:

- This ordinance does not account for non-residents' dogs.
- Veterinary guidance on neuter is for the dog to be older than for spay - spay should be before first heat in 6-9 months, but neuter is up to 18 to allow for proper growth.
- Page 4 line 7: There should not be a fee for a dog who can medically not be sterilized - this will affect the willingness of folks to adopt old/sick/big dogs who cannot be sterilized.
- Page 6 line 12: Breed is too general a term and does not account for unintended litters.
- Page 7 line 22: should not be a Department-approved veterinarian – the surgery should be able to be done by any licensed veterinarian. Who is drafting this “certificate of sterilization” and is there some concern that vets will forge these?

Given the many concerns about the outcomes for people and pets, coupled with the lack of evidence to show their efficacy, Best Friends does not support mandatory spay and neuter or the proposed San Francisco ordinance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Kauffman".

Lisa Kauffman  
Campaign Senior Strategist, Electoral Initiatives  
Best Friends Animal Society  
[lisak@bestfriends.org](mailto:lisak@bestfriends.org)  
(213) 712-5872

**From:** [shannon.green](#)  
**To:** [DorseyStaff \(BOS\)](#); [MahmoodStaff](#); [WongStaff \(BOS\)](#); [crayton@sfgov.org](mailto:crayton@sfgov.org); [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Concerns Regarding Proposed Mandatory Spay/Neuter Policy - File#251162  
**Date:** Friday, March 20, 2026 1:18:12 PM

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Dear Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to express serious concern regarding the proposed mandatory spay/neuter policy under consideration in San Francisco. While I fully support and advocate for responsible pet ownership, awareness and humane animal welfare initiatives, this proposal raises significant practical, ethical, and economic concerns that warrant careful reconsideration.

Mandatory spay/neuter laws have not demonstrated effectiveness in addressing the root causes of animal overpopulation. Shelter overcrowding is driven primarily by stray and unowned animals, animal surrendered do to housing concerns and the cost associated with Veterinary care, not by responsible owners or preservation breeders. This proposal does little to meaningfully reduce that population and instead risks misdirecting resources away from more impactful solutions.

In addition, the cost of veterinary care in San Francisco is already extraordinarily high, with spay/neuter procedures often reaching levels that are financially burdensome for many residents. Mandating such procedures without addressing affordability places an inequitable strain on responsible pet owners, particularly those who may not qualify for limited low-cost programs yet still cannot reasonably absorb these expenses. This approach risks penalizing compliance rather than encouraging it, and may ultimately lead to unintended consequences, including reduced veterinary care or avoidance of licensing altogether.

A more effective and humane approach would be to fully fund and expand access to low-cost spay/neuter services and lowering Veterinary costs while increasing public awareness of these programs. Ensuring accessibility—rather than imposing mandates—has proven to be a more successful strategy in encouraging compliance and improving community outcomes.

Additionally, this policy imposes unnecessary financial and logistical burdens on responsible dog owners and ethical breeders who already adhere to high standards of care. Rather than penalizing these individuals, the City would be better served by prioritizing comprehensive public education around responsible dog stewardship—equipping owners with the knowledge and resources to make informed, humane decisions—while also working to meaningfully reduce the cost of veterinary care across San Francisco. Expanding affordable access to veterinary services, including spay/neuter, and increasing awareness of available programs would drive far more effective and equitable outcomes than broad mandates, while still supporting the City's animal welfare goals.

The proposed exemption for competition dogs is overly narrow and fails to account for many responsible owners who maintain intact dogs for legitimate purposes outside of formal competition including the ongoing studies showing major health benefits associated with keeping dogs intact. This exclusion unfairly targets a broad segment of conscientious owners without justification.

Finally, the use of the term “guardian” in place of “owner” raises serious legal concerns. “Guardian” is a term traditionally reserved for human legal relationships, and its application to animal ownership may unintentionally undermine the legal status of dogs as property. This shift could restrict the ability of owners, veterinarians, and agencies to make necessary decisions for animal care, while also opening the door to increased litigation and higher costs associated with pet ownership.

In summary, I respectfully urge the City to reconsider this policy and instead focus on proven, balanced solutions: enforce existing laws, expand affordable spay/neuter and Veterinary access, and invest in public education. These approaches will more effectively address animal welfare concerns without placing undue burdens on responsible members of the community.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,  
Shannon G.

**From:** [Jackel](#)  
**To:** [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#); [Crayton@sfgov.org](mailto:Crayton@sfgov.org); [WongStaff \(BOS\)](#); [MahmoodStaff](#); [DorseyStaff \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** File No. 251162; San Francisco proposed spay/neuter ordinance  
**Date:** Friday, March 20, 2026 1:57:07 PM

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Hello! I'm writing to share my thoughts and opinions on File No. 251162; proposed spay/neuter ordinance.

This is a terrible idea that does nothing to address pet overpopulation, while placing a noxious burden on responsible pet owners who are themselves likely to be helping to solve, not creating these problems.

I am a bay area local, graduate of USF School of Law, and frequent visitor, with my dogs, to the city of SF. I love this city dearly. I breed my dogs and exhibit them in conformation, tracking, scent work, obedience, field sports and agility. I have spent my life studying and working my borzois and collies.

Whether or not to alter a dog is a complex personal question that depends on the dog's temperament, intended use, health status (including complex hormonal and endocrine issues), training level or goal and value or lack as a breeding animal. There are many reasons this serious medical procedure might be helpful or harmful. This is a private decision to be made by an owner who is ideally well advised by their vet, breeder or trainer. There is no need for legislative involvement.

Providing free spay/neuter to low income pet owners, outreach into stray populations and especially ensuring that the city offers sufficient pet friendly low income housing would be excellent ways to use municipal funds to help at-risk pets and their handlers.

I stand behind all of the AKC's points below:

- Mandatory spay/neuter laws have not proven an effective solution to animal control concerns — this proposal does not address the stray population, which is the primary driver of shelter overcrowding.
- 
- A better solution is to fully fund low-cost spay/neuter programs and ensure the public is aware of available services.
- 
- Mandatory spay/neuter laws impose significant costs on responsible owners and breeders. The city should instead enforce existing animal control laws, expand low-cost spay/neuter access, and fund public education on responsible dog ownership.
- 
- The competition dog exemption is narrowly defined and will exclude many responsible dog owners who simply choose to keep their dogs intact.
- 
- The term “guardian” is a legal term used by courts to protect people and is not appropriate when referring to dogs. The use of this term may reduce the legal classification and value of

dogs as property, which would restrict the rights of owners, veterinarians, and government agencies to protect and care for dogs. It could also provide the basis for a vast increase in the number of frivolous and expensive lawsuits being filed, which would result in higher costs for pet care.

As an attorney, I particularly agree that 'guardian' should not be used as a legal or municipal term for the owner or handler of a dog. I prefer 'owner, and/or handler.'

Thanks for your time and attention.

Summer Jackson

**From:** [Jan Dykema](#)  
**To:** [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** file number 251162  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 25, 2026 7:59:02 PM

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Why pass laws you cannot enforce? Offer free spay neuter along with free rabies vax for all dogs ( and cats). Rabies is a HUMAN health hazard especially among poor people and homeless. Can you imagine a rabies outbreak in a homeless camp? Do something that will help, not something that never has helped anywhere it has been passed. Homeless people and poor people have no \$\$ to make sure their pets do not procreate.. and arresting them and taking their pets is heartless. So a \$186.00 "permit" will not apply to them, their dogs will be taken and then the shelters will be even more crowded.. Use your heads. DO NOT PASS  
Jan Dykema

**From:** [vcd3tervs@att.net](mailto:vcd3tervs@att.net)  
**To:** [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on File No. 251162 - Mandatory Spay/Neuter  
**Date:** Thursday, April 2, 2026 11:40:37 AM

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Dear SF Board of Supervisors,

While I am not a SF resident, I am writing to oppose the mandatory/spay neuter in SF (File No. 251162). This will not solve the problem of overcrowded shelters and will prevent responsible breeders in SF from being able to affordably breed a litter (if they can at all), as well as create burdens for the average pet owner. It creates burdensome and overreaching regulations. People need to have a source for their pets, and the best source is the responsible small breeder that can properly socialize the puppies and educate their puppy buyers and assure that the puppy is a good match for the new owner's lifestyle.

What is needed is affordable voluntary spay/neuter clinics. It cost me over \$1000 dollars to have my dog spayed last summer when her conformation show career was over. This is beyond the reach of most families struggling with the high cost of living in the Bay Area.

I also oppose the use of the term "guardian" when used for dog ownership. The use of this term may reduce the legal classification and value of dogs as property, which would restrict the rights of owners, veterinarians, and government agencies to protect and care for dogs. It could also provide the basis for a vast increase in the number of frivolous and expensive lawsuits being filed, which would result in higher costs for pet care.

I am worried what this will do to the future of dog shows in San Francisco and to the show dogs that live there, as well as pets that people do not choose to breed but who do not want to have them spayed or neutered for health or personal reasons.

Regards,

Linda Knowles

San Jose, CA

**Elsa** (Belgian Tervuren) - Safari Living The Adventure VCD3 UDX BN VER RE TDU2 MXB MJB MFS T2B2 SWM SCME SHDE TKI, GCH-Br AAD (bn 3/20/20)