

June 16, 2010

Mayor Julian Castro
City of San Antonio
PO Box 839966
San Antonio, TX 78283

Dear Mayor Castro and Council Members,

Responsible Pet Owners Alliance appreciates the positive changes that have been made in the Chapter 5 Animal Ordinance Revisions – especially the removal of the Intact Dog Permit which mandated all dogs be sterilized by 6 months of age. This is a national radical legislative agenda and not written to address our local animal problems. The changes to the Dangerous Animal Section are definitely an improvement.

The 2007 Ordinance Revisions were so onerous that there are still some remaining areas of concern. Animal Care Services (ACS) is now all about power and control instead of public health and safety and the control of Rabies, a disease that is fatal to humans. Animal owners pay city taxes for animal control just as they do for Fire and Police Department protection.

ACS is focusing on pet owners who confine their pets on premises instead of publicizing and enforcing the Leash Law. Perhaps that's easier but Nathan Winograd, founder of the No Kill Movement, says this type legislation will simply mean more animals relinquished to our rescuers, animal shelters and ACS – or dumped in the streets. It's easier to get in Fort Knox than to get ACS to accept dogs and cats at the Facility. Don't even waste your time calling to get them to come pick up loose animals in your neighborhood!

We won't be with you tomorrow as you know our positions by now. Our city residents who oppose the ordinance won't be there either as most are fearful of retaliation. They are afraid to sign in with their home addresses. Pet ownership is threatened as never before in history from the current political climate of radical "animal rights" extremists and animal controls.

Seizures and impoundments for code violations still run rampant throughout the ordinance with animals killed if not timely redeemed. The proposal is still discriminatory to low income pet owners and we have one of the highest poverty rates in the country.

It was our organization that first promoted the No Kill Philosophy and urged the San Antonio Area Foundation to bring in Nathan Winograd, the founder of the No Kill Movement, in October 2007 after the city refused to do so.

However perhaps we should rethink the goal of becoming a No Kill Community by 2012 or ever if it places this incredible pressure on our animal control directors to meet "quotas" every day by not accepting animals at the Facility nor picking them up off the streets. Director Hendel stated months ago he will bring in 26,000 animals this year. How does he know that?

We've been in the trenches for 20 years with our Pet Education, Assistance & Rescue Program in Bexar County. Our Pet Care Hotline functions under the 311 number. We know the problems and we know the solutions. It doesn't take rocket science. We continue to expand our programs at no cost to the city and will be contacting you soon for appointments.
Sincerely,

Mary Beth Duerler
(Volunteer) Executive Director