



Mandatory Spay/Neuter laws

Current positions of several respected National medical and animal welfare organizations – Partial opposition statements with links for extended information.

October 6, 2013

The American College of Theriogenologists

<http://www.theriogenology.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=59>

Position Statement on Mandatory Spay-Neuter: (2013)

The American College of Theriogenologists (ACT) is the certifying college for veterinarians board certified in reproduction (specialists) and the Society for Theriogenology (SFT) is an organization of veterinarians with a special interest in reproduction in veterinary medicine. **The ACT and SFT believe that companion animals not intended for breeding should be spayed or neutered; however, both organizations believe that the decision to spay or neuter a pet must be made on a case by case basis, taking into consideration the pet's age, breed, sex, intended use, household environment and temperament. The use of generalized rules concerning gonadectomy (removal of the ovaries or testes) is not in the best interest of the health or well-being of the pets or their owners.** (snip)

Based on the research available, it is clear there are a number of health benefits of the sex steroid hormones and that this benefit varies with age, sex, and breed. Therefore, although spay-neuter is the responsible choice for most pets, it is in the best interest of each individual patient for its veterinarian to assess the risks and benefits of gonadectomy and to advise his/her clients on what is appropriate for each individual pet at each stage of its life. (snip)

The ACT and SFT do not believe that **mandatory** spay/neuter programs will significantly reduce the pet overpopulation problems, since most animals that are abandoned are relinquished because of behavior, health, economic and life changing conditions and not due to their reproductive status.

Includes 164 selected scientific references

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American Veterinary Medical Association

<https://www.avma.org/News/JAVMANews/Pages/090515j.aspx>

AVMA: Mandatory spay/neuter a bad idea – (May 1, 2009)

The AVMA policy on "Dog and Cat Population Control" has been revised to express the Association's nonsupport for regulations or laws mandating spay/neuter of privately owned, nonshelter dogs and cats.

The Animal Welfare Committee recommended the changes to the policy, which reads, in part, as follows: "The AVMA does not support regulations or legislation mandating spay/neuter of privately owned, non-shelter dogs and cats. Although spaying and neutering helps control dog and cat populations, mandatory approaches may contribute to pet owners avoiding licensing, rabies vaccination and veterinary care for their pets, and may have other unintended consequences." (Snip)

Although spay/neuter is an important part of effective population control programs, and may benefit individual dogs and cats if performed at the appropriate time, whether and when to spay/neuter specific animals requires the application of science and professional judgment to ensure the best outcome for veterinary patients and their owners. Prevention of unexpected litters; reduced incidences of some cancers and reproductive diseases; and prevention and amelioration of certain undesirable behaviors have been documented as benefits to spaying/neutering dogs and cats. However, potential health problems associated with spaying and neutering have also been identified, including an increased risk of prostatic cancer in males; increased risks of bone cancer and hip dysplasia in large-breed dogs associated with sterilization before maturity; and increased incidences of obesity, diabetes, urinary tract infections, urinary incontinence, and hypothyroidism.

There are conflicting reports regarding euthanasia rates and animal control costs achieved in communities that have enacted mandatory spay/neuter. (snip)

ASPCA

Position Statement on Mandatory Spay/Neuter Laws

<http://www.asPCA.org/nyc/mobile-spay-neuter-clinic/position-statement-on-mandatory-spayneuter-laws>

ASPCA Position

The ASPCA does not support mandatory spay/neuter laws, however, based on currently available scientific information, the ASPCA strongly supports spay/neuter as an effective means to reduce companion animal overpopulation. In particular, the ASPCA supports voluntary, affordable spay/neuter programs for owned pets, Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs for feral cats and the mandatory sterilization of shelter animals and certain individual, owned animals based on their or their owners' behavior (such as animals deemed dangerous under local ordinances or those repeatedly caught at-large). In order to assure the efficacy of any spay/neuter program designed to reduce shelter intake and euthanasia, the ASPCA believes that each community must conduct credible research into the particular causes of relinquishment and abandonment and the sources of animals in its shelters, including the barriers to spay/neuter services that are faced by those populations contributing disproportionately to the problem. (snip)

In summary, the ASPCA recognizes that sterilization is currently the best method to reduce companion animal overpopulation, and therefore to reduce shelter intake and euthanasia. The most important step a humane community can take to decrease companion animal overpopulation is to make a safe, effective, voluntary spay/neuter program available and readily accessible to the community, and create programs and incentives targeted to the populations known to be contributing disproportionately to shelter intake and euthanasia.

Includes 16 selected research/scientific references

Alley Cat Allies

<http://www.alleycat.org/document.doc?id=240>

Missing the Target – Mandatory Spay/Neuter Legislation Fails to Reach Most Intact Cats (2009)

Most people agree that increasing the spay/neuter rate of cats in the United States is a worthy goal, and a growing number of communities are considering legislation to accomplish this result. Mandatory spay/neuter legislation (MSN) is frequently discussed, but a look at the demographics of the cat population shows that this approach would not be effective at raising the overall cat neuter rate.

The fundamental problem with MSN is that it targets only the pet population – 82% of which is already spayed or neutered – (*Current research indicates that between 88% and 94% of households spay/neuter their pet cats in the US.*) - while ignoring that a potentially equally large stray and feral cat population exists, less than 3% of which is neutered. Furthermore, MSN is counterproductive; it spends limited public resources on administrative expenses instead of on spay/neuter programs. (snip)

Includes 8 research/scientific references

National Animal Interest Alliance

<http://www.naiaonline.org/about-us/position-statements/mandatory-spay-neuter-legislation/>

NAIA policy statement: Mandatory Spay/Neuter Legislation

NAIA opposes mandatory spay/neuter legislation because 1) there is no evidence to suggest that it is effective in achieving its stated goal; 2) causes well-documented health and developmental problems in some pets, especially when performed before sexual maturity; 3) pushes responsible breeders out of the licensing system; 4) reduces the availability of well-bred healthy, home bred and raised puppies and kittens; 5) encourages the importation of puppies and dogs from less acceptable sources, including foreign countries; 6) laws that force owners to perform surgery on their pets without a rational basis for doing so may be unconstitutional.

[Click here to read NAIA's full position statement on this issue.](#)

[Click here for a background of NAIA's involvement in this issue](#)