



The Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc.

"World's Largest Registry of Pedigreed Cats"

Use of the term animal "guardian" instead of owner

The "guardian" issue has become prominent over the last few years and legislation to add this word to animal laws has now passed in several cities and the state of Rhode Island. The Cat Fanciers' Association, along with many other organizations, is concerned about the potential implications of this term in both animal related laws and in common usage. The "guardian" word as a replacement for owner is part of a campaign, led by In Defense of Animals, called "They Are Not Our Property - We Are Not Their Owners". IDA disavows the concept and language of animal ownership and seeks to "reconstruct the social and legal relationship between humans and animals".

At its October 3, 2003 meeting the CFA Board of Directors unanimously approved an official CFA position statement as follows:

I OWN my cat!! - CFA's statement concerning the "guardian" term:

"The Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc. strongly supports caring and responsible pet ownership. CFA upholds the traditional property rights of animal owners that provide the basis for their ability to make decisions about their animals' well-being, including health, reproduction and transfer to a new owner. Owned cats are valued family members. As legal property, they cannot be taken away from us except by constitutional due process. The term "guardian", whether inserted into animal laws or in common usage, contradicts this critical protective and personal relationship. CFA rejects the concept of animal "guardianship", which can be challenged or revoked, because of the potential legal and social ramifications that would negatively impact veterinarians, animal rescuers, breeders and sellers of animals as well as pet owners."

Others who have so far published statements in opposition to the use of "guardian" include the American Veterinary Medical Association, The American Kennel Club, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, National Animal Interest Alliance, the American Dog Owners Association, Responsible Pet Owners Alliance, TX, The Civil Justice Association of California, The California Veterinary Medical Association and the office of the Los Angeles City Attorney.

To correspond with the CFA Legislative Committee, please email Legislation@CFA.org