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## **New Jersey Animals Threatened by Bill S-297, Which Aims to Limit Non-Profit Veterinary Care**

### ***AWA Urges All NJ Residents to Contact and Oppose***

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Voorhees, NJ: – This week, New Jersey Senator Joe Vitale introduced bill S-297. Under this bill, AWA's Pet Clinic and any non-profit pet clinic in New Jersey could not:

- Spay/neuter or treat feral cats
- Spay/neuter or treat shelter animals or rescue animals
- Continue treating feral cats, shelter or rescue animals after the bill's immediate effective date
- Perform services for any clients not on government assistance
- Provide compassionate euthanasia for medically suffering animals for any clients not on government assistance
- Use current or future grant money to spay/neuter animals for any clients not on government assistance

This bill would limit access to pet owners who cannot afford the cost of spay/neuter or other medical treatment at private veterinary practices. It would lead to more animals being surrendered to animal shelters due to the prohibitive cost of medical treatment as well as more unplanned pregnancies and litters of kittens and puppies in our state. Ultimately, this bill would increase the euthanasia of feral cats and shelter/rescue animals throughout our state.

S-297 has been referred to the Senate Commerce Committee. The committee is scheduled to meet on **Monday, January 25th**. It is a very real possibility S-297 will be voted on by the committee on that date.

We urge our animal loving community to contact Senator Vitale's office (732-855-7441) and express strong opposition to S-297. We ask you to contact the state senator from your jurisdiction as well. For residents of District 5 (where AWA is located), please contact Senator Nilisa Cruz-Perez at 856-547-4800.

#### **About AWA**

Animal Welfare Association, a private, non-profit, 501(c) 3 animal welfare organization, serves the people and animals of southern New Jersey. AWA is dedicated to eliminating animal suffering, promoting the importance of the human-animal bond, and improving the role of animals in the well-being of people. Through a variety of programs including adoptions, veterinary services, pet therapy, and humane education, in 2015 over 23,000 pets were served through AWA programming. AWA is South Jersey's leader in progressive companion animal care.

