S T A T E  O F  N E W  Y O R K

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2013-2014 Regular Sessions

I N  A S S E M B L Y

(PREFILED)

January 9, 2013

Introduced by M. of A. ROSENTHAL -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental Operations

AN ACT to amend the state law, in relation to designating rescue cats as the official state cat

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Legislative intent. Since their domestication some tens of thousands of years ago, cats and their human counterparts have lived happily side by side, each providing a lifetime of love, companionship and loyalty to the other. Early civilizations revered the cat as sacred, capable of vanquishing evil spirits. Still others cherished the cat for its ability to protect property from insects and vermin. While modern day cats may have lost some of their mythic stature, they certainly have not lost any of their appeal. Cats have become the most popular house pet in the United States, with 90 million felines living in 34% of all households. There are few things as calming in this world as a curled-up cat meowing peacefully in one's lap.

Cats offer their humans countless hours of companionship and love, provide protection against loneliness and depression, and their antics are oftentimes capable of bringing one to tears with laughter. All of this they offer, and ask only for a loving caretaker who will provide them shelter and food in return. Any cat owner will tell you that no one owns a cat, but despite their fearless independence, cats need our protection.

The ASPCA estimates that there are roughly between 60 and 100 million stray or feral cats in the United States alone. Each year, an additional six to eight million animals enter the shelter system. Of those, one animal is euthanized every eight seconds, meaning that approximately 70% of all cats that enter the shelter system are euthanized.

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [ ] is old law to be omitted.

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Legislation to name the "rescue cat" New York state's official state cat will help educate and raise awareness about the plight of animals that enter the shelter system. These animals, most of which are given up through no fault of their own, are perceived as "damaged". As shelter populations soar, these innocent animals face an ever-increasing risk of euthanasia.

These deaths can be prevented through adoption. Rescue cats are desperate for a second chance, and want nothing more than to become loving members of the family. Designating the rescue cat as the official cat of New York state will help prevent the senseless killing of thousands of cats each year by raising awareness of the overpopulation problem and promoting adoption through education and awareness.

S 2. The state law is amended by adding a new section 79-a to read as follows:

S 79-A. STATE CAT. THE RESCUE CAT SHALL BE THE OFFICIAL CAT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK. AS USED IN THIS SECTION "RESCUE CAT" SHALL MEAN A CAT OF ANY BREED OR MIXTURE OF BREEDS RESCUED AND ADOPTED FROM AN ANIMAL SHELTER OR RESCUE GROUP LOCATED IN THE STATE.

S 3. This act shall take effect immediately.