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THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Backyard breeders (trying to evade taxes) oppose spay/neuter laws, OC activist says

26 Comments · posted by Teri Sforza, Register staff writer

Orange County's Judie Mancuso, a force behind California's Senate Bill 250, The Pet Responsibility Act, did not take kindly to being characterized as affiliating with fringe animal rights terrorists in a recent letter written by Teddi Alves, an anti-spay-neuter activist from Huntington Beach.

Mancuso, who favors spay/neuter laws such as the kind under consideration by Laguna Woods, provided these thoughts on the matter, which we found illuminating:

The debate over the Laguna Woods spay and neuter legislation should be a sensible discussion of facts and solutions. It is regrettable, therefore, that Teddi Alves, a Huntington Beach organizer who calls herself "a highly educated and sophisticated woman of substance," resorts to insulting the citizens and government of Laguna Woods. Her letter maligns the Laguna Woods City Council as an "unsophisticated venue[]" and accuses City Manager Leslie Keane of having "ZERO sophistication," even questioning Keane's "level of education and certification." And Laguna Woods citizens themselves, according to Ms. Alves, are "mostly seniors, 66 to 80% women, likely of the genre of the lower wage scales and Social Security benefits payable."

These same disrespectful attitudes are reflected in the mean-spirited cartoons and flyers that have recently bombarded the area. The anonymous forces behind these flyers clearly assume that Laguna Woods residents are susceptible to unsubstantiated exaggeration, and unable to reach their own informed decisions. Not so. Laguna Woods residents are perfectly capable of understanding the facts behind the pending spay and neuter ordinance, which include these:

- Every year, more than half a million healthy dogs and cats are put to death in California shelters, simply for lack of space and resources to keep them. Even keeping these pets until they are killed costs Californians a whopping \$250,000,000 per year. These numbers aren't mere speculation; they come from the California Department of Public Health and estimates based on the experience of animal control around the state, as detailed on our website, www.YesOnSB250.com.
- A Zogby poll taken in January 2008 found that, even before learning the number of dogs and cats killed yearly, more than 65% of Californians supported the approach of curtailing the number of unwanted pets before they reached the shelters. Once the poll respondents were informed of the facts facing California pets, over 80% of poll respondents supported spay and neuter laws with sensible exceptions.
- Experience from other communities that have enacted spay and neuter laws over the past decade shows that such legislation is, indeed, effective. It works like this: As any pet owner/guardian will tell you, it is impossible to control the behavior of a dog or cat all the time, and dogs and cats are driven to mate. Once an animal is spayed or neutered, however, there is no chance that the animal will reproduce-which means fewer unwanted puppies and kittens, fewer pets entering the shelters at taxpayer expense, and a reduction in the need to kill healthy pets just because we don't have space for them.