



## **Opinion Editorial**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 16, 2016

# **Molly's Bill Continues to Save Lives**

Molly's Bill was a piece of legislation I authored as an Assemblyman in 2011 to protect animals whose lives were threatened by being required to get the Rabies vaccine. Molly, a beloved dog who resided with her family within my district served as the inspiration behind the bill where in rare cases, administering a vaccine could cause an animal to die; my bill prevented families from having to choose between violating the law and losing their beloved pet.

Since then, many families have been spared the grief of losing a pet while protecting the health and safety of surrounding residents. We addressed concerns about safety by requiring a licensed veterinarian to determine that a dog is healthy and would suffer serious harm if administered the vaccine. Once these factors are confirmed, the pet owner could apply for an exemption to the rabies vaccination requirement with their local government, who could then accept or reject the application.

If the exemption was granted the owner must keep their pet on their property, or if off the property for walking, it must be handled by an adult on a leash no more than six feet in length. Since Molly's Bill passed, 82 applications have been approved and 128 have been denied in San Bernardino County.

The bill has been a success in protecting both the safety of our citizens and the lives of our pets by striking the right balance with public safety and animal protection. Here in San Bernardino County where I am now honored to serve as Supervisor, cities had different policies. Molly's Bill added coherence and consistency to local, county and state policy. Since 2011, we have been able to give pets across the state the exemptions they need while also keeping instances of rabies down.

If you have any questions or comments on Molly's Bill or other issues, please let me know at [curt.hagman@bos.sbcounty.gov](mailto:curt.hagman@bos.sbcounty.gov).