

MEDIA CONTACT:

Nina Thompson

619-372-0916

nthompson@sdhumane.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCT. 10, 2025

Governor Newsom Signs Groundbreaking Bills Expanding Access to Veterinary Care in California

SAN DIEGO — Governor Gavin Newsom has signed into law a package of bills expanding access to veterinary care and strengthening California’s commitment to animal welfare. The new legislation will address the state’s critical shortage of veterinary professionals, improve care for pets in need and ensure animals receive timely, affordable treatment.

San Diego Humane Society joined forces with the San Francisco SPCA, Valley Humane Society, CalAnimals, ASPCA, Best Friends Animal Society, Humane World for Animals and the Michelson Center for Public Policy to advocate for the reforms.

Together, they celebrated the signing of these landmark bills as a major step forward for both pets and the people who care for them.

“This is a victory for California’s animals and their families,” said Dr. Gary Weitzman, president and CEO of San Diego Humane Society. “By improving access to veterinary care, supporting veterinary professionals, and ensuring all pets have access to veterinary care, we’re creating a state where every animal has the chance to live a healthy, full life with families who love them.”

With California facing a severe shortage of veterinarians — especially in rural areas and underserved communities — [AB 516](#) and [SB 602](#) will make it easier for pets to receive timely medical attention by expanding what licensed veterinary professionals are permitted to do.

Veterinary Staff Duties (AB 516), Authored by Assemblymember Ash Kalra (D-San Jose):

[AB 516](#) clarifies that **Registered Veterinary Technicians (RVTs) and veterinary assistants** can perform any medical task that is not explicitly prohibited by law. By maximizing the skill set of veterinary staff, AB 516 enables veterinarians to operate more efficiently, allowing more animals to receive care.

Improving the Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (SB 602), Authored by State Senator Dave Cortese (D-Silicon Valley):

[SB 602](#) allows **RVTs in designated animal shelters to conduct essential veterinary appointments** — such as vaccinations and parasite control — without requiring a supervising veterinarian to be on-site. This measure will help bridge the care gap for vulnerable animals in shelters and underserved communities.

Together, these laws remove barriers that have long prevented California pet owners from accessing veterinary services, while maintaining the highest standards of safety and professional oversight.

Photos and b-roll for media use can be downloaded here:

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/wvgTwtFLQJ>

Photo / video credit for all: San Diego Humane Society



About San Diego Humane Society

San Diego Humane Society’s scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. We offer programs that strengthen the human-animal bond, prevent cruelty and neglect, provide medical care, educate the community and serve as a safety net for all pet families. Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society has campuses in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego. For more information, please visit sdhumane.org.