

## **Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (PETS Act)**

The destructive force of Hurricane Katrina exposed many flaws in our nation's emergency preparedness programs. One easily correctible issue that has come to light is that many of our city and state authorities' disaster plans do not take into account how to rescue the portion of the population who are pet owners.

In order to qualify for Federal Emergency Management Agency funding, a city or state is required to submit a plan detailing its disaster preparedness program. The PETS Act would simply require that the State and local emergency preparedness authorities include how they will accommodate households with pets or service animals when presenting these plans to the FEMA.

This bi-partisan legislation is necessary because Hurricane Katrina has clearly shown that when given a choice between their own personal safety or abandoning their household pets, a significant number of people will choose to risk their lives in order to remain with their pets. It is now clear that we must require these jurisdictions to have plans in effect to deal with their pet-owning populations as a matter of public safety.

There are significant problems, including serious health and safety risks to the disaster area, that are exacerbated by the abandoning of pets. Many of these problems can be mitigated or eliminated simply through the proper planning that this legislation advocates.

There are currently over 358 million pets in the United States residing in 63% of American households.

This legislation is supported by the Humane Society of the United States, the Doris Day Animal League, the Best Friends Animal Society, and the American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA).