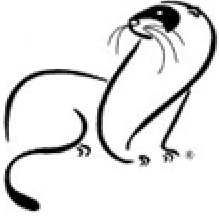


PRESS RELEASE

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The American Ferret Association, Inc.

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The American Ferret Association Urges Governor Schwarzenegger to “Legalize” California Ferret Owners by Signing Senate Bill 89

California Senate Bill 89 that decriminalizes ferret ownership in the state reached the Governor’s desk last week. The American Ferret Association (AFA) joins the California Veterinary Medical Association, Californians for Ferret Legalization, and other civic and humane organizations urging Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to sign SB 89 into law.

By allowing ferret owners to apply for “certificates of amnesty” for their pets, SB 89 provides relief from California’s 70-year old ban on ferrets. The new law requires ferrets to be immunized against rabies and be spayed or neutered.

“This legislation, which represents the culmination of more than a decade of debate and compromise, is a major step towards restoring the rights of individuals to own the pet of their choice,” says Ms. Gigi Shields, President of the American Ferret Association. “It also encourages responsible pet ownership and promotes a safer public health environment by allowing ferret owners to seek proper healthcare for their pets.”

California’s ban on ferrets was a result of a scientifically inaccurate 1933 law that placed ferrets on the state’s list of “Wild Animals” – animals that could not be “imported” into the state without a costly permit issued through the state’s Department of Fish and Game.

For more than two decades California ferret enthusiasts have been working to change the law.

Ferrets are not wild animals. “All reputable scientific sources, including the Smithsonian Institution, the American Society of Mammalogists, and zoos-- including the San Diego Zoo, support the domestic status of the ferret,” states Ms. Shields. “Governor Schwarzenegger has first-hand knowledge that ferrets are lovable pets.” A ferret co-starred with him in the hit movie *Kindergarten Cop* – a film often credited with the growing popularity of ferrets as pets since the ‘90’s.

“Ferrets are the third most popular companion animal in the US, after dogs and cats,” says Shields. Today an estimated 10 million ferrets live in the US-- 3 to 5 percent are already living in California, albeit illegally.

Legalization of ferret ownership is expected to translate into cost savings for the state’s taxpayers, by reducing unnecessary government regulation and all its associated expense.

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The American Ferret Association, Inc., is a nonprofit educational organization, comprised of ferret owners, breeders, veterinary and allied health professionals, and those interested in the health and welfare of the ferret. It is the largest ferret organization in North America. The AFA supports public and professional education, and promotes research and investigation to benefit the ferret, and communication with other humane organizations worldwide.

On the web at: www.ferret.org.

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