

56:8-211
LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST
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LAWS OF: 2019 **CHAPTER:** 234
NJSA: 56:8-211 (Prohibits leasing dogs and cats.)
BILL NO: A4552/4385 (Substituted for S3531)

SPONSOR(S) John Armato and others

DATE INTRODUCED: 10/15/2018

COMMITTEE: **ASSEMBLY:** Consumer Affairs
 SENATE: Commerce

AMENDED DURING PASSAGE: Yes

DATE OF PASSAGE: **ASSEMBLY:** 6/27/2019
 SENATE: 6/27/2019

DATE OF APPROVAL: 8/9/2019

FOLLOWING ARE ATTACHED IF AVAILABLE:

FINAL TEXT OF BILL (Assembly Committee Substitute (First Reprint) enacted) Yes
A4552/4385

INTRODUCE BILL A4552: (Sponsor's statement begins on page of 2): Yes

INTRODUCE BILL A4385: (Sponsor's statement begins on page of 2): Yes

COMMITTEE STATEMENT: **ASSEMBLY:** Yes
 SENATE: Yes

(Audio archived recordings of the committee meetings, corresponding to the date of the committee statement, **may possibly** be found at www.njleg.state.nj.us)

FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT: Yes

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE: No

S3531

INTRODUCE BILL S3531: (Sponsor's statement begins on page of 2): Yes

COMMITTEE STATEMENT: **ASSEMBLY:** No
 SENATE: Yes

(Audio archived recordings of the committee meetings, corresponding to the date of the committee statement, **may possibly** be found at www.njleg.state.nj.us)

FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT: Yes

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE: No

VETO MESSAGE: No

GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING: Yes

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

To check for circulating copies, contact New Jersey State Government Publications at the State Library (609) 278-2640 ext.103 or <mailto:refdesk@njstatelib.org>

REPORTS: No

HEARINGS: No

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES: Yes

"Leasing dogs and cats is prohibited under new New Jersey law,"
Associated Press State Wire: New Jersey (NJ) - August 9, 2019

"Murphy signs pair of animal-rights bills,"
The Times, (Trenton, NJ) - August 10, 2019

"Law puts end to practice of leasing pets And there's a new law aimed at stopping dog fights,"
The Star-Ledger, (Newark, NJ) - August 10, 2019

RWH/JA

P.L. 2019, CHAPTER 234, *approved August 9, 2019*
Assembly Committee Substitute (*First Reprint*) for
Assembly, Nos. 4552 and 4385

1 AN ACT prohibiting the leasing of dogs and cats and supplementing
2 P.L.1960, c.39 (C.56:8-1 et seq.).
3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:
6

7 1. a. It shall be an unlawful practice and a violation of
8 P.L.1960, c.39 (C.56:8-1 et seq.) for a pet dealer, as defined in
9 section 2 of P.L.1999, c.336 (C.56:8-93), to enter into a:

10 (1) contract for a cat or dog in which the transfer of ownership
11 of the animal is contingent on the making of payments over a period
12 of time subsequent to the transfer of possession of the animal,
13 unless these payments are on an unsecured loan for the purchase of
14 the animal; or

15 (2) lease agreement that provides for or offers the option of
16 transferring ownership of a cat or dog at the end of the lease term.

17 b. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 1 of P.L.1966,
18 c.39 (C.56:8-13) to the contrary, a pet dealer who violates this
19 section shall be liable for the following penalties:

20 (1) for a first offense, a penalty of not more than \$10,000; and

21 (2) for a second or subsequent offense, a penalty of not more
22 than \$30,000.

23 c. In addition to any other remedies provided by P.L.1960, c.39
24 (C.56:8-1 et seq.) or any other applicable law, a consumer taking
25 possession of a cat or dog pursuant to a contract or lease as
26 described in subsection a. of this section shall be deemed the owner
27 of the cat or dog, shall have a civil cause of action in any court of
28 competent jurisdiction, and shall be entitled to recover all moneys
29 paid by the consumer, litigation costs, and reasonable attorney's
30 fees.

31 ¹d. The provisions of this section shall not apply to, and shall
32 not prohibit the temporary leasing or rental of the following
33 animals, provided the animals are used in accordance with
34 applicable federal, State and local animal protection laws:

35 (1) A purebred cat or dog which is leased for the express
36 purpose of breeding pursuant to a written lease recorded with a
37 national purebred dog or cat registry, and which lease is for a
38 specific time and has an established end-date; or

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate floor amendments adopted June 27, 2019.

1 (2) An animal trained or utilized to perform tasks, including, but
2 not limited to, guide dogs, security dogs, law enforcement dogs, and
3 other assistance animals.¹

4

5 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall apply to any
6 lease, contract, agreement, or transaction entered into on or after the
7 effective date.

8

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11 _____

Prohibits leasing dogs and cats.

ASSEMBLY, No. 4552

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 15, 2018

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman RAJ MUKHERJI

District 33 (Hudson)

Assemblyman KEVIN J. ROONEY

District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Prohibits leasing dogs and cats.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/16/2019)

1 AN ACT prohibiting the leasing of dogs and cats and supplementing
2 P.L.1960, c.39 (C.56:8-1 et seq.).

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. a. It shall be an unlawful practice and a violation of
8 P.L.1960, c.39 (C.56:8-1 et seq.) to enter into a:

9 (1) contract for a cat or dog in which the transfer of ownership
10 of the animal is contingent on the making of payments over a period
11 of time subsequent to the transfer of possession of the animal,
12 unless these payments are on an unsecured loan for the purchase of
13 the animal; or

14 (2) lease agreement that provides for or offers the option of
15 transferring ownership of a cat or dog at the end of the lease term.

16 b. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 1 of P.L.1966,
17 c.39 (C.56:8-13) to the contrary, a person who violates this section
18 shall be liable for the following penalties:

19 (1) for a first offense, a penalty of not more than \$10,000; and

20 (2) for a second or subsequent offense, a penalty of not more
21 than \$30,000.

22 c. In addition to any other remedies provided by P.L.1960, c.39
23 (C.56:8-1 et seq.) or any other applicable law, a consumer taking
24 possession of a cat or dog pursuant to a contract or lease as
25 described in subsection a. of this section shall be deemed the owner
26 of the cat or dog, shall have a civil cause of action in any court of
27 competent jurisdiction, and shall be entitled to recover all moneys
28 paid by the consumer, litigation costs, and reasonable attorney's
29 fees.

30

31 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall apply to any
32 lease, contract, agreement, or transaction entered into on or after the
33 effective date.

34

35

36

STATEMENT

37

38 This bill makes leasing dogs and cats a violation of the State
39 consumer fraud law.

40 New Jersey residents are sometimes deceived into signing a lease
41 for a pet and end up paying more than they intended. This bill
42 prohibits contracts in which the transfer of ownership of a cat or
43 dog is contingent on the making of payments over a period of time
44 subsequent to the transfer of possession of the cat or dog, unless
45 those payments are on an unsecured loan for the purchase of the
46 animal. It also prohibits lease agreements that provide for or offer
47 the option of transferring ownership of a cat or dog at the end of the
48 lease term.

A4552 MUKHERJI, ROONEY

3

1 Violations of the bill's provisions are punishable by a monetary
2 penalty of up to \$10,000 for a first offense and up to \$30,000 for
3 any subsequent offense. In addition, the bill provides that a
4 consumer who enters into this kind of contract would be deemed the
5 owner of the cat or dog and would be entitled to a full refund,
6 litigation costs, and attorney's fees, to be recovered in a civil court
7 proceeding.

ASSEMBLY, No. 4385

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 13, 2018

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman JOHN ARMATO

District 2 (Atlantic)

Assemblyman VINCENT MAZZEO

District 2 (Atlantic)

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Benson, Assemblywomen Jones, Downey and Assemblyman Houghtaling

SYNOPSIS

Prohibits leasing of domestic companion animals.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning the leasing of domestic companion animals and
2 supplementing P.L.1960, c.39 (C.56:8-1 et seq.).

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. a. It shall be an unlawful practice and a violation of P.L.1960,
8 c.39 (C.56:8-1 et seq.) to lease a domestic companion animal or enter
9 into a contract or any other type of agreement or transaction to lease a
10 domestic companion animal.

11 b. In addition to any other remedies provided by P.L.1960, c.39
12 (C.56:8-1 et seq.) or any other applicable law, a consumer taking
13 possession of a domestic companion animal leased to the consumer
14 pursuant to a contract or other type of agreement or transaction
15 shall be deemed the owner of the domestic companion animal and
16 shall be entitled to the return of all moneys paid by the consumer.

17 c. As used in this section:

18 “Domestic companion animal” means any animal commonly
19 referred to as a pet or one that has been bought, bred, raised or
20 otherwise acquired, in accordance with local ordinances and State
21 and federal law for the primary purpose of providing
22 companionship to the owner, rather than for business or agricultural
23 purposes.

24 “Lease a domestic companion animal” means the transfer of
25 ownership of a domestic companion animal contingent on the
26 making of payments over a period of time subsequent to the transfer
27 of possession of the domestic companion animal, unless those
28 payments are on an unsecured loan for the purchase of the animal.

29

30 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall apply to any
31 lease, contract, agreement, or transaction entered into on or after the
32 effective date.

33

34

35

STATEMENT

36

37 This bill establishes leasing a domestic companion animal or
38 entering into a contract or any other type of agreement or transaction
39 to lease a domestic companion animal as an unlawful practice and a
40 violation of the State consumer fraud law. The bill defines “lease a
41 domestic companion animal” as the transfer of ownership of a
42 domestic companion animal contingent on the making of payments
43 over a period of time subsequent to the transfer of possession of the
44 domestic companion animal, unless those payments are on an
45 unsecured loan for the purchase of the animal.

46 Any violation of the bill’s provisions is a violation of the State
47 consumer fraud law, punishable by a monetary penalty of up to
48 \$10,000 for a first offense and up to \$20,000 for any subsequent

1 offense. In addition, such violations can result in cease and desist
2 orders issued by the Attorney General, the assessment of punitive
3 damages, and the awarding of treble damages and costs to an injured
4 party. In addition to those remedies and any others pursuant to any
5 other law, the bill provides that a consumer made party to this kind
6 of unlawful contract, agreement, or other type of transaction would
7 be deemed the owner of the domestic companion animal and
8 entitled to the return of all moneys paid by the consumer.

ASSEMBLY CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
ASSEMBLY, Nos. 4552 and 4385

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 17, 2019

The Assembly Consumer Affairs Committee reports favorably an Assembly Committee Substitute for Assembly Bill Nos. 4552 and 4385.

As reported by the committee, the committee substitute makes it a violation of the consumer fraud act for a pet dealer to lease cats and dogs.

The committee substitute prohibits a pet dealer from entering into contracts in which the transfer of ownership of a cat or dog is contingent on the making of payments over a period of time subsequent to the transfer of possession of the cat or dog, unless those payments are on an unsecured loan for the purchase of the animal.

The committee substitute also prohibits a pet dealer from entering into lease agreements that provide for or offer the option of transferring ownership of a cat or dog at the end of the lease term.

Under the consumer fraud act, a "pet dealer" means any person engaged in the ordinary course of business in the sale of cats or dogs to the public for profit or any person who sells or offers for sale more than five cats or dogs in one year.

Violations of the committee substitute's provisions are punishable by a monetary penalty of up to \$10,000 for a first offense and up to \$30,000 for any subsequent offense. In addition, the committee substitute provides that a consumer who enters into this type of contract would be deemed the owner of the cat or dog and would be entitled to a full refund, litigation costs, and attorney's fees, to be recovered in a civil court proceeding.

SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
ASSEMBLY, Nos. 4552 and 4385

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 17, 2019

The Senate Commerce Committee reports favorably the Assembly Committee Substitute for Assembly Bill Nos. 4552 and 4385.

This committee substitute makes it a violation of the consumer fraud act for a pet dealer to lease cats and dogs.

The substitute prohibits a pet dealer from entering into contracts in which the transfer of ownership of a cat or dog is contingent on the making of payments over a period of time subsequent to the transfer of possession of the cat or dog, unless those payments are on an unsecured loan for the purchase of the animal.

The substitute also prohibits a pet dealer from entering into lease agreements that provide for or offer the option of transferring ownership of a cat or dog at the end of the lease term.

Under the consumer fraud act, a "pet dealer" means any person engaged in the ordinary course of business in the sale of cats or dogs to the public for profit or any person who sells or offers for sale more than five cats or dogs in one year.

Violations of the committee substitute's provisions are punishable by a monetary penalty of up to \$10,000 for a first offense and up to \$30,000 for any subsequent offense. In addition, the committee substitute provides that a consumer who enters into this type of contract would be deemed the owner of the cat or dog and would be entitled to a full refund, litigation costs, and attorney's fees, to be recovered in a civil court proceeding.

STATEMENT TO

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
ASSEMBLY, Nos. 4552 and 4385**

with Senate Floor Amendments
(Proposed by Senator GOPAL)

ADOPTED: JUNE 27, 2019

These amendments provide that the bill does not apply to, and does not prohibit the temporary leasing or rental of the following animals, provided the animals are used in accordance with applicable federal, State and local animal protection laws:

(1) A purebred cat or dog which is leased for the express purpose of breeding pursuant to a written lease recorded with a national purebred dog or cat registry, and which lease is for a specific time and has an established end-date; or

(2) An animal trained or utilized to perform tasks, including, but not limited to, guide dogs, security dogs, law enforcement dogs, and other assistance animals.

SENATE, No. 3531

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 4, 2019

Sponsored by:

Senator VIN GOPAL

District 11 (Monmouth)

Senator KRISTIN M. CORRADO

District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators T.Kean and Cruz-Perez

SYNOPSIS

Prohibits leasing dogs and cats.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/26/2019)

S3531 GOPAL, CORRADO

2

1 AN ACT prohibiting the leasing of dogs and cats and supplementing
2 P.L.1960, c.39 (C.56:8-1 et seq.).

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. a. It shall be an unlawful practice and a violation of
8 P.L.1960, c.39 (C.56:8-1 et seq.) to enter into a:

9 (1) contract for a cat or dog in which the transfer of ownership
10 of the animal is contingent on the making of payments over a period
11 of time subsequent to the transfer of possession of the animal,
12 unless these payments are on an unsecured loan for the purchase of
13 the animal; or

14 (2) lease agreement that provides for or offers the option of
15 transferring ownership of a cat or dog at the end of the lease term.

16 b. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 1 of P.L.1966,
17 c.39 (C.56:8-13) to the contrary, a person who violates this section
18 shall be liable for the following penalties:

19 (1) for a first offense, a penalty of not more than \$10,000; and

20 (2) for a second or subsequent offense, a penalty of not more
21 than \$30,000.

22 c. In addition to any other remedies provided by P.L.1960, c.39
23 (C.56:8-1 et seq.) or any other applicable law, a consumer taking
24 possession of a cat or dog pursuant to a contract or lease as
25 described in subsection a. of this section shall be deemed the owner
26 of the cat or dog, shall have a civil cause of action in any court of
27 competent jurisdiction, and shall be entitled to recover all moneys
28 paid by the consumer, litigation costs, and reasonable attorney's
29 fees.

30

31 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall apply to any
32 lease, contract, agreement, or transaction entered into on or after the
33 effective date.

34

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36

STATEMENT

37

38 This bill makes leasing dogs and cats a violation of the State
39 consumer fraud law.

40 New Jersey residents are sometimes deceived into signing a lease
41 for a pet and end up paying more than they intended. This bill
42 prohibits contracts in which the transfer of ownership of a cat or
43 dog is contingent on the making of payments over a period of time
44 subsequent to the transfer of possession of the cat or dog, unless
45 those payments are on an unsecured loan for the purchase of the
46 animal. It also prohibits lease agreements that provide for or offer
47 the option of transferring ownership of a cat or dog at the end of the
48 lease term.

S3531 GOPAL, CORRADO

3

1 Violations of the bill's provisions are punishable by a monetary
2 penalty of up to \$10,000 for a first offense and up to \$30,000 for
3 any subsequent offense. In addition, the bill provides that a
4 consumer who enters into this kind of contract would be deemed the
5 owner of the cat or dog and would be entitled to a full refund,
6 litigation costs, and attorney's fees, to be recovered in a civil court
7 proceeding.

SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR **SENATE, No. 3531**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 17, 2019

The Senate Commerce Committee reports favorably a Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 3531.

This substitute bill makes it a violation of the consumer fraud act for a pet dealer to lease cats and dogs.

The bill prohibits a pet dealer from entering into contracts in which the transfer of ownership of a cat or dog is contingent on the making of payments over a period of time subsequent to the transfer of possession of the cat or dog, unless those payments are on an unsecured loan for the purchase of the animal.

The bill also prohibits a pet dealer from entering into lease agreements that provide for or offer the option of transferring ownership of a cat or dog at the end of the lease term.

Under the consumer fraud act, a “pet dealer” means any person engaged in the ordinary course of business in the sale of cats or dogs to the public for profit or any person who sells or offers for sale more than five cats or dogs in one year.

Violations of the bill’s provisions are punishable by a monetary penalty of up to \$10,000 for a first offense and up to \$30,000 for any subsequent offense. In addition, the bill provides that a consumer who enters into this type of contract would be deemed the owner of the cat or dog and would be entitled to a full refund, litigation costs, and attorney’s fees, to be recovered in a civil court proceeding.

This substitute is identical to the Assembly Committee Substitute for Assembly Bill Nos. 4552 and 4385.

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Enhancing Animal Protections

08/9/2019

TRENTON - Governor Phil Murphy today signed two bills into law, prohibiting the leasing of dogs and cats, and establishing the ownership, possession, purchasing, selling, or manufacturing of animal fighting paraphernalia as a crime of the third degree.

"As the owner of three pets and a strong proponent of animal protections, I am proud to sign legislation that bans the predatory practice of leasing dogs and cats and codifying the possession and trade of animal fighting equipment as a third-degree crime," **said Governor Phil Murphy**. "I thank the advocates and legislators that have fought for so long against these cruel and inhumane practices."

A4552 prohibits pet dealers from entering into contracts in which the transfer of ownership of a cat or dog is contingent on the making payments over a period of time subsequent to the transfer of possession of the cat or dog, unless those payments are on an unsecured loan for the purchase of the animal. The legislation also prohibits a pet dealer from entering into lease agreements that provide for or offer the option of transferring ownership of a cat or dog at the end of a lease term. Violators of the law will be subject to penalties of up to \$10,000 for a first offense and up to \$30,000 for any subsequent offenses.

Primary sponsors of the bill include Assemblymembers John Armato, Raj Mukherji, Vincent Mazzeo, Kevin Rooney, and Carol Murphy and Senators Vin Gopal and Kristin Corrado.

"Leasing is popular with pet dealers because it makes high-priced puppies seem more affordable to consumers," **said Assemblyman John Armato**. "In many instances, this is not the case. Residents who have entered into these lease agreements find they will pay more over time than the actual retail price of the pet only to find out they still may not fully own the dog or cat. Families interested in buying from a pet store a special breed of dog or cat pet should not be conned into an overpriced leasing agreement."

"These unfair leasing agreements take advantage of unwary families and places certain specialty breeds of pets at risk," **said Assemblyman Raj Mukherji**. "This practice also facilitates the sale of puppy mill dogs and encourages unhealthy breeding practices."

"New Jersey residents are being deceived into signing a lease for a pet then ending up paying more than they intended," **said Assemblyman Vince Mazzeo**. "Pet dogs and cats are investments, not just monetarily but also as members of our families. These types of leasing agreements are taking advantage of residents who want a specific breed of dog or cat to become a part of their lives."

"People are feeling scammed by these leasing agreements," **said Assemblywoman Carol Murphy**. "This is a fairly new industry practice that manipulates unwary consumers into an overly expensive leasing agreement. Residents should not have to enter into such agreements just to own a pet."

"There's an implicit assumption in the idea of 'leasing' a pet - that, after a period of time, that pet is going to be torn away from a loving home, possibly just after it's come to know its new family," **said Senator Vin Gopal**. "When families can't or won't pay, their beloved cat or dog is taken away and leased to the next buyer in line, just to pad the breeder's pockets. Many families don't even understand that they're signing up for a lease when they agree to a contract - they think that they've signed up for a pet adoption loan, and are instead tricked into high-interest payment plans that force them to pay large sums of money to predatory businesses in order to keep their beloved animals. At the end of the day, our pets aren't fancy cars or expensive furniture to be leased - they're true members of the family, and deserve to be treated that way."

"Families are being deceived into thinking they're purchasing a high-end breed with the promise of an affordable monthly payment plan, not realizing they're actually signing a two- or three-year lease that could result in their pet being repossessed," **said Senator Kristin Corrado**. "This deceptive practice of renting-to-own puppies and kittens employed by sinister pet brokers is cruel and must be stopped."

S3146 establishes that owning, possessing, buying, selling, transferring, or manufacturing animal fighting paraphernalia for the purpose of engaging in or otherwise promoting or facilitating the fighting or baiting of a living animal or creature is a crime of the third degree under the State animal cruelty statutes, punishable by a term of imprisonment of three to five years, a fine of up to \$15,000 a year, or both. The legislation further establishes a civil penalty for the aforementioned offense of no less than \$3,000 and no more than \$5,000.

Primary sponsors of the bill include Senators Troy Singleton and Dawn Marie Addiego and Assemblymembers Carol Murphy, Jamel Holley, Daniel Benson, and Paul Moriarty.

“Animal fighting is immoral and an inhumane way of treating animals,” **said Senator Troy Singleton**. “This new law will further discourage animal fighting in New Jersey by enforcing current laws and putting more pressure on those who sell paraphernalia and bait animals into fighting.”

“There is no space in our society for animal cruelty,” **said Senator Dawn Marie Addiego**. “We do not accept violence, torture and inhumane treatment, and therefore, we cannot accept the specialized equipment used to perpetrate this violence. I am glad the Governor is taking this step to help sweep the streets of these vile products.”

“Dog fighting, cock fighting and animal combat of any kind is downright cruel,” **said Assemblywoman Carol Murphy**. “We do not condone or tolerate this behavior in New Jersey. However, it can be difficult for law enforcement to charge suspects without actually having seen them facilitate animal fighting. By criminalizing paraphernalia, we will make it easier for officers to gather evidence and hold violators accountable.”

“Animal fighting is among the most callous and inhumane forms of animal cruelty,” **said Assemblyman Jamel Holley**. “We must do all we can end this practice in our state, starting with ensuring law enforcement are able to charge suspects accordingly when they see signs of trouble.”

“This law takes a comprehensive approach to combatting animal fighting in our State,” **said Assemblyman Daniel Benson**. “If officers find clear evidence of fighting activity, they should be able to charge a suspect regardless of whether they’ve seen the act take place. When more abusers are brought to justice, the lives of more animals will be saved.”

“No domesticated animal is born knowing how to viciously fight another animal; they are trained to do so by people who want nothing more than to profit off of their suffering,” **said Assemblyman Paul Moriarty**. “Strengthening our animal cruelty laws will undoubtedly help us reduce incidents in New Jersey and rescue animals from abusive situations.”

“The ASPCA has long warned consumers to be skeptical of the pet stores and online sellers who may try to deceive them about the sources and health of the dogs they sell, and pet leasing is just one more example of the disregard many pet stores have for the well-being of their animals,” **said Debora Bresch, senior director of state legislation for the ASPCA, Upper Atlantic region**. “We thank Governor Murphy for signing this legislation to end this particular inhumane practice by which pet stores team up with private lenders to deceive consumers while they amp up profits for puppy mills.”

“By signing S3146, Governor Murphy has provided more tools for our law enforcement officials to combat cruel and illegal animal fighting in our state,” **said Brian Hackett, New Jersey State Director for The Humane Society of the United States**. “This action marks a milestone in animal welfare, as NJ becomes the 25th state to pass a prohibition of the sale and possession of animal fighting paraphernalia, closing a critical loophole in our already very strong anti-animal fighting laws. Today, we are also grateful that the governor has signed the ban on pet leasing, which is a deceptive scheme that some pet stores have used to peddle puppy mill cruelty onto unsuspecting consumers. HSUS sincerely thanks Governor Murphy and all the bills’ sponsors for their continued support for animal protection legislation in New Jersey.”

STATEMENT TO
SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE, No. 3531

with Senate Floor Amendments
(Proposed by Senator GOPAL)

ADOPTED: JUNE 20, 2019

These amendments provide that the bill does not apply to, and does not prohibit the temporary leasing or rental of the following animals, provided the animals are used in accordance with applicable federal, State and local animal protection laws:

(1) A purebred cat or dog which is leased for the express purpose of breeding pursuant to a written lease recorded with a national purebred dog or cat registry, and which lease is for a specific time and has an established end-date; or

(2) An animal trained or utilized to perform tasks, including, but not limited to, guide dogs, security dogs, law enforcement dogs, and other assistance animals.