

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

10 JUL 21 P5 00

SENATE
S. No. **1805**

RECEIVED BY

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

A pet is an animal kept for companionship and enjoyment or a household animal, as opposed to livestock, laboratory animals, working animals or sport animals, which are kept for economic reasons. Pets however, provide their owners with other benefits: to relieve stress, provide companionship and security. In fact, there is now a medically-approved class of "therapy animals," mostly dogs that are brought to visit confined humans. A recent study concluded that owning a pet can reduce the risk of a heart attack by 2% and that pets are better than medication in reducing blood pressure. Pets have the ability to stimulate their caregivers, in particular the elderly, giving people someone to take care of, someone to exercise with, and someone to help them heal from a physically or psychologically troubled past. Finally, caring for pets teaches children how to be responsible and gentle with beings that are weaker than them.

Many households have pets. In the U.S., around 63 percent of all households (71.1 million) are pet owners. In the Philippines many households have more than one animal. Unfortunately, despite the love for their pets, many owners have been lax, and sometimes negligent, in the care of their animals. Many owners are working individuals who have little time to take their pets to the veterinarians for regular check-ups.

This Act aims to create a special non-working holiday to increase public awareness of the concept of pet care, ensure meaningful observance of the same, allow pet owners the opportunity to take their pets for a check-up, and encourage participation in activities that are to be spearheaded by the Bureau of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture and the various government offices concerned.

Francis of Assisi is honored by the Catholic Church as the patron saint of animals and ecology. Every year on the Sunday nearest his October 4 feast day, Catholic and other Christian churches around the world host services where animals are blessed. These services celebrate Francis's compassionate concern for all creatures. It is proposed that National Pet day be celebrated every 4th of October.¹

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
act.

¹ This bill was originally filed in the third regular session of the 14th Congress.

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1 AN ACT
2 DECLARING OCTOBER 4 OF EVERY YEAR AS A SPECIAL
3 WORKING HOLIDAY TO BE KNOWN AS NATIONAL PET DAY

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

4 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “National Pet Day
5 Act.”

6 SECTION 2. *Special Non-Working Holiday.* – In recognition of the need to
7 establish a comprehensive national consciousness of pet care, the fourth day of October is
8 hereby declared as a special non-working holiday to be known as “National Pet Day”.

9 SECTION 3. *Activities that shall be undertaken in observance of this occasion.* –

10 (a) The Philippine Information Agency shall be mandated to allocate a minimum
11 of one (1) hour airtime for programs exclusively raising public awareness of pet care,
12 animal welfare and animal rights. Relative thereto, all Kapisanan ng mga Broadkaster
13 ng Pilipinas-affiliated television and radio networks nationwide are encouraged to
14 allocate airtime for said programs.

15 (b) The Bureau of Animal Industry of the Dept. of Agriculture, the Department of
16 Education, the Commission on Higher Education, shall lead public and private school
17 communities at all levels in organizing consciousness-raising activities on pet care,
18 animal welfare and animal rights human rights. Their activities shall be in coordination
19 with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and advocates for animal welfare
20 including the following:

- 1 a. Philippine Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PSPCA);
- 2 b. Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS);
- 3 c. *Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) of the Department of*
- 4 *Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);*
- 5 d. Philippine Veterinary Medical Association (PVMA);
- 6 e. Veterinary Practitioners Association of the Philippines (VPAP);
- 7 f. Philippine Animal Hospital Association of the Philippines (PAHA);
- 8 g. Philippine Canine Club, Inc. (PCCI).

9 The Bureau of Animal Industry of the Dept. of Agriculture, within sixty (60) days
10 from the effectivity of this Act, shall promulgate rules and regulations to carry out and
11 enforce the provisions of this Act.

12 SECTION 4. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial
13 implementation of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the Department
14 of Agriculture. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for its full implementation shall
15 be included in the annual General Appropriations Act as a distinct and separate item.

16 SECTION 5. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid
17 or unconstitutional, the remainder of the Act or the provision not otherwise affected shall
18 remain valid and subsisting.

19 SECTION 6. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
20 executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to,
21 or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended
22 accordingly.

23 SECTION 7. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
24 after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

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