

Why Guardian?

“It is my sincere belief that the result of increased numbers of people thinking and acting as ‘guardians’ of their animal companions will lead to fewer cases of abuse, neglect and abandonment, and to fewer animals being killed in our nation’s shelters.”

**Carl Friedman, Director
San Francisco Department of Animal Care & Control**

“The word ‘owner’ is outdated and doesn’t reflect the human/animal bond that exists in our culture today. The word ‘guardian’ denotes a higher level of responsibility towards another being. Although it is a simple language change that does not alter the legal status of animals as property, we hope that the increased awareness of the ‘guardian’ language will elevate the status of animals in our community. We will use the word ‘guardian’ as another tool to fight animal abuse and exploitation.”

**Jan McHugh-Smith, Executive Director
Humane Society of Boulder Valley**

“A primary purpose of animal welfare work is to help people treat animals with kindness and respect. Guardian language shifts the focus from material property to thoughtful responsibility, thereby increasing awareness in children and adults. Increased awareness will then lead to compassionate care of all animals in our community. By supporting a change to guardian language, we are taking the first step to a better quality of life for all animals.”

**Steven R. McNall
Executive Director of the Pasadena Humane Society & SPCA**

“The term ‘guardian’ accurately describes the relationship of perpetual care that is needed to teach children respect, compassion and kindness for domestic pets. Studies show that children who learn compassion and respect for animals have a better chance at becoming compassionate adults, responsible community members, and are less likely to behave violently towards others.”

**Edwin J. Sayres, President
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**

“In the legal sense, animals are regarded as ‘things,’ mere objects that can be bought, sold, discarded or destroyed at an owner’s whim. Only when animals can be regarded as ‘persons’ in the eyes of the law will it be possible to give teeth to the often-fuzzy laws protecting animals from abuse.”

**Dr. Jane Goodall
The Goodall Foundation**

“Over the past 126 years, the Oakland SPCA has learned that creating a better tomorrow for our companion animals starts with teaching respect for all living beings today. IDA’s Guardian Campaign is an effort that starts at the very basic level, recognizing the power of our words in shaping not only our own attitudes, but the attitudes of those who are around us.”

**Gary Templin, President
Oakland SPCA**

“Although a semantic change, the use of the term ‘guardian,’ rather than ‘owner,’ will encourage a more responsible relationship between pets and those who care for them. Already, the change has contributed to the public dialogue about the treatment of animals in our society.”

**Matt Gonzalez, President
San Francisco Board of Supervisors**

“Animals need to be regarded as more than material property of an owner. Changing the title of pet ‘owner’ to pet ‘guardian’ is a symbolic move towards recognizing the importance and rights of animals. The term ‘owner’ denotes an apathetic relationship relating to material and inanimate things. The term ‘guardian’ denotes a positive and mutually beneficial relationship between two living beings, where constant care, attention and affection are necessary for prosperity. The term ‘guardian’ instills respect for and appreciation of our companion animals.”

**Jeffrey Prang, Mayor
West Hollywood, California**

“As an attorney, it is all too obvious to me that true legal protection for animals from cruelty and abuse will not occur as long as they are recognized and treated as nothing more than commodities, property and things. Codifying the language and concepts of animal guardianship will help to usher in the day when our laws reflect our society’s feelings that companion animals are members of our families and not mere objects to be used, abused and disposed of at will.”

Robert Trimble, Attorney and Counselor

“A primary purpose of animal welfare is to help people treat animals with kindness and respect. Guardianship language shifts the focus from material property to thoughtful responsibility, thereby increasing awareness in children and adults. Increased awareness will then lead to compassionate care of all animals in our community. By supporting a change to guardianship language, we are taking the first step to a better quality of life for all the animals.”

**Steven R. McNall,
Executive Director of the Pasadena Humane Society & SPCA**