

Date of Hearing: April 21, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS

Marc Berman, Chair

AB 2010 (Soria) – As Amended March 19, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Veterinary medicine: veterinary surgery premises: spay and neuter services.

**SUMMARY:** Specifies that “high-quality, high-volume spay or neuter services”, as defined, that are performed in a registered veterinary premises are not required to comply with specified standards, including the requirement for a separate room for aseptic surgeries.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Provides for the regulation of veterinary medicine under the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act (Act), which outlines the licensure requirements, scope of practice, and responsibilities of individuals practicing animal health care tasks in the state. (Business and Professions Code (BPC) § 4800 *et seq.*)
- 2) Establishes the CVMB under the jurisdiction of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), responsible for enforcing the Act, and regulating veterinarians, registered veterinary technicians (RVTs), Veterinary Assistant Controlled Substance Permit (VACSP) holders, and veterinary premises until January 1, 2026. (BPC §§ 4800-4811)
- 3) Requires that all veterinary premises be registered with the CVMB. (BPC § 4853)
- 4) Defines “premises” as “the location of operation where veterinary medicine, veterinary dentistry, veterinary surgery, and the various branches thereof is being practiced and shall include a building, kennel, mobile unit, or vehicle.” (BPC § 4853(b))
- 5) Requires that all premises where veterinary medicine, dentistry, or surgery is practiced, and all instruments, apparatus and apparel used in connection with those practices, shall be kept clean and sanitary at all times, and shall conform to those minimum standards established by the CVMB. (BPC § 4854)
- 6) Establishes minimum standards that veterinary premises shall maintain, including but not limited to:
  - a) A requirement that veterinary medical equipment used to perform aseptic procedures shall be sterilized and maintained in a sterile condition,
  - b) A requirement that anesthetic equipment in accordance with the procedures performed shall be maintained in proper working condition and available at all times, and
  - c) A requirement that appropriate drugs and equipment shall be readily available to treat an animal emergency.

(California Code of Regulations, Title 16 (16 CCR) Div. 20, § 2030(a))

- 7) Establishes further requirements for veterinary premises providing aseptic surgical services, including but not limited to:
  - a) A prohibition on open shelving in the surgical room,
  - b) A requirement to provide a means for viewing diagnostic imaging during surgery,
  - c) A requirement that, in any sterile procedure, a separate sterile pack shall be used for each animal, and
  - d) All instruments, packs, and equipment that have been sterilized shall have an indicator that reacts to and verifies sterilization.

(16 CCR Div. 20, § 2030(b))
- 8) Requires that a mobile veterinary premises that provides aseptic surgical services shall have a room, separate and distinct from other rooms, reserved for aseptic surgical procedures which require aseptic preparation. (16 CCR Div. 20 § 2030.2(c)(1))

**THIS BILL:**

- 1) Establishes that “high-quality, high-volume spay or neuter services”, as defined, shall not be required to comply with the following premises standards:
  - a) A requirement for a separate room that is reserved for aseptic surgical procedures that require aseptic preparation,
  - b) A prohibition on open shelving in the area in which the aseptic surgical sterilization procedure is performed, and
  - c) A requirement for equipment for viewing radiographs.
- 2) Defines “high-quality, high-volume spay or neuter services” as “the aseptic surgical sterilization by a veterinarian, including the supervision by the veterinarian of presurgical preparation and recovery of the animals, of 20 or more dogs, cats, or rabbits, or any combination thereof, within 12 consecutive hours.”

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown; this bill is keyed fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

**COMMENTS:**

**Purpose.** This bill is co-sponsored by the *American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)*, the *San Diego Humane Society and SPCA*, the *San Francisco SPCA*, and *Animal Balance*. According to the author:

California’s pet overpopulation crisis continues to strain communities across the state. The challenge is particularly acute in rural regions throughout the Central Valley, where access to affordable spay and neuter services may be hours away and out of reach for many families. While advancements in veterinary surgical practices offer hope in addressing this growing crisis, California regulations prevent High-Quality, High-Volume Spay and Neuter (HQHVSN) services from being used to its maximum potential, dramatically limiting its

ability to provide relief to the communities that need it the most. AB 2010 provides a practical solution by removing unnecessary regulatory barriers to HQHVSN, while still upholding high standards of care and safety. This provides a simple, common-sense fix to allow HQHVSN at the scale needed to meet the public need, relieve our overcrowded shelters and save the lives of countless animals.

## **Background.**

*Efforts to Encourage Pet Sterilization.* Over the past several years, California has made efforts to humanely reduce animal overpopulation and encourage the spay and neuter of dogs and cats across the state. In 1998, the Legislature enacted Senate Bill 1785 by Senator Tom Hayden, which formally established that the State of California's policy is "that no adoptable animal should be euthanized if it can be adopted into a suitable home" and "that no treatable animal should be euthanized." As part of these goals, and overall efforts to reduce pet overpopulation that leads to euthanasia, this bill and subsequent legislation established a mandate that no public or private animal shelter, humane society, rescue group or other nonprofit shall adopt out any dog or cat that has not been sterilized, subject to very limited exceptions.

Since 2012, California has established two primary funding streams to support animal welfare and sterilization. The Pet Lover's License Plate program directs specialty plate proceeds to a grant program for low-cost or no-cost animal sterilization at eligible veterinary facilities. In 2023, this program distributed approximately \$488,000, with individual awards ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Additionally, AB 485 created a voluntary tax return checkoff in 2015 for the Prevention of Animal Homelessness and Cruelty Fund. These funds assist local animal control agencies and shelters in their efforts to eliminate pet homelessness and provide spay and neuter services. In 2022, the checkoff generated over \$308,000, resulting in roughly \$250,000 in grants with individual awards between \$7,500 and \$22,500

More recent, after a successful campaign by the sponsor of this bill and the VMB, a Pet Lover's License Plate program was established in 2012, and in 2014, SB 1323 (Lieu) was enacted to allocate the proceeds from purchases of this specialty license plate to fund a grant program to eligible veterinary facilities that offer low-cost or no-cost animal sterilization services under the VMB. The most recent distribution of grant funding in 2023 allocated approximately \$488,000. This consisted of an estimated amount of \$25,000 – \$50,000 per award.

The Legislature enacted AB 485 (Williams) in 2015 to create a voluntary tax return checkoff to provide revenue to a Prevention of Animal Homelessness and Cruelty Fund. This checkoff allocates money to local animal control agencies and shelters to support spay and neuter activities and to prevent and eliminate dog and cat homelessness. In 2022, a total of \$308,449 was contributed through the checkoff, and approximately \$250,000 was awarded that year to eligible agencies, with an estimated amount of \$7,500 – \$22,500 per award.

In February of 2022, the California for All Animals program was launched to advance marketing and outreach efforts designed to engage shelters in every region of the state that met the goals outlined in the Animal Shelter Assistance Act. \$15.5 million in grant awards have since been awarded, along with \$12.5 million for in-person visits, trainings, outreach, and program expenses. Grant funding is prioritized for programs to increase low-cost and free spay/neuter services, access to low cost and free veterinary care to prevent owner relinquishment to animal shelters, and programs that reunite lost pets with their owners and incentivize making adoption accessible for all communities.

In 2023, the Assembly and Senate passed ACR 86 authored by Assemblymember Kalra. This resolution puts a spotlight on the national and statewide pet overpopulation crisis, noting the increase in pet adoptions and purchases throughout the COVID-19 pandemic which exacerbated these issues. This resolution also notes the lack of low-cost and free spay and neuter options, as well as disparities in access to veterinary care. This resolution made a commitment to pursue policies that increase the availability of low-cost, high volume spay and neuter and encourage more out-of-state veterinarians and RVTs to perform and assist with sterilization.

Most recently, the Legislature passed SB 1233 (Wilk, Chapter 613, Stats. Of 2024), which authorizes veterinary schools in California to develop and offer a high-quality, high-volume spay and neuter certification program as elective coursework to enrolled students. Among other requirements, the program would need to make low- or no-cost sterilization services available to the public, with priority access based on “socioeconomic status”, while ensuring the training and care provided by the program is consistent with generally accepted standards in the profession. There are currently two accredited veterinary schools in California: the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, and the Western University of Health Sciences. Notably, UC Davis oversees the Koret Shelter Medicine Program (KSMP), with research specializing in the state’s adoption outcomes and shelter management improvement. Among other research projects and initiatives, KSMP administers the \$50 million “California for All Animals” grant program established in the 2020-21 budget which aims to fulfill the state’s goal that no healthy animal is euthanized in a shelter.

*Registered Veterinary Premises.* Notwithstanding rare circumstances, all veterinary medicine in California must be rendered at a registered veterinary premises. Premises can include a building, kennel, mobile unit, or vehicle. Additionally, a mobile unit or vehicle can operate without the need for independent registration if they operate from a building or facility that is, in itself, a registered veterinary premises. In order to obtain a veterinary premises registration, the owner must submit an application that includes the name of each owner or operator of the premises, including the type of corporate entity, if applicable, the name of the premises, and the name of the responsible licensee manager who is to act for and on behalf of the registered premises.

Moreover, current law requires that all premises where veterinary medicine, dentistry, or surgery is being practiced, and all instruments, apparatus and apparel used in connection with those practices, be “kept clean and sanitary at all times”, and conform to minimum standards established by the CVMB. These standards, contained in 16 CCR Div. 20, Section 2030, require that among other things, anesthetic equipment in accordance with any procedures performed shall be maintained in proper working condition and available at all times, and that all premises have appropriate drugs and equipment readily available to treat an animal emergency. Regulations further establish that, specific to a veterinary premises that provides aseptic surgical services, there must be a means for viewing diagnostic imaging during surgery, and that open shelving is prohibited in the surgical room, among other requirements. Finally, regulations further mandate that a mobile veterinary premises that provides aseptic surgical services shall have a room that is distinct from the others and specifically reserved for such procedures.

While workable for most scenarios of veterinary medicine, the author and sponsors of this bill argue that current veterinary premises regulations are too restrictive to accommodate “high-quality, high-volume spay and neuter” (HQHVSN) procedures. Specifically, the sponsors of this measure seek to provide HQHVSN procedures in a “Mobile Animal Surgical Hospital” (MASH) setting, such as a community center or gymnasium. They contend that MASH clinics allow for a

more efficient flow of animals and exponential increase in the number of animals that can be safely and quickly sterilized. However, current veterinary premises regulations—particularly, the requirement for a separate surgical suite for aseptic procedures—make it difficult for MASH clinics to operate in temporary or community-based settings.

Sponsors such as the San Francisco SPCA and the San Diego Humane Society and SPCA would like to work with organizations like Animal Balance—a nonprofit organization that works with veterinarians to provide “pop-up” MASH clinics across the country—to provide low- and no-cost HWHVSN services across California. As such, the author and sponsors have put forward this measure to specify that HQHVSNS services shall not be required to comply with certain veterinary premises regulations, including the requirement for a separate room that is reserved for aseptic surgical procedures, the requirement to maintain equipment for viewing radiographs, and the prohibition on open shelving in the area in which the aseptic surgical sterilization procedure is performed. For purposes of these exemptions, the bill defines HQHVSNS services as “the aseptic surgical sterilization by a veterinarian, including the supervision by the veterinarian of presurgical preparation and recovery of the animals, of 20 or more dogs, cats, or rabbits, or any combination thereof, within 12 consecutive hours.

### **Current Related Legislation.**

AB 1999 (Kalra) would amend the “ownership exemption” in the Veterinary Medical Practice Act; establishes “shelter veterinarian”, “retired veterinarian” and “retired volunteer veterinarian” license categories and associated fees; clarifies terminology related to the practice of veterinary medicine via telemedicine; clarifies that the veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR) can be established on an annual basis; and requires specified information related to corporate ownership disclosures when renewing a veterinary premises registration. *This bill passed this committee unanimously, and is currently pending in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.*

AB 1733 (Lee) would specify that both six hours of self-study and four hours of pro bono spay or neuter services may be credited toward the required 36 hours of continuing education for veterinarians seeking license renewal. *This bill passed this committee unanimously, and is currently pending in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.*

**Prior Related Legislation.** AB 1502 (Berman, Chapter 195, Statutes of 2025) extended the sunset date for the California Veterinary Medical Board to January 1, 2030, and enacted various revisions in response to the Board’s sunset review.

SB 1233 (Wilk, Chapter 613, Statutes of 2024) authorizes a California veterinary medical school to develop a high-quality, high-volume spay and neuter program to be offered as elective coursework to their students, and to make services through the program available at low- or no-cost to the public.

### **ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:**

This bill is co-sponsored by the *American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)*, the *San Diego Humane Society and SPCA*, the *San Francisco SPCA*, and *Animal Balance*. In a joint letter of support, they write: “Every spay or neuter surgery performed today prevents countless future births. By expanding access to high-quality sterilization services, AB 2010 will reduce shelter overcrowding, decrease euthanasia, relieve financial strain on families and local governments, and improve animal welfare outcomes statewide.

This bill is supported by the *City of Sacramento*. They write: “By allowing clinics to utilize space more efficiently while continuing to follow strict surgical protocols, the bill enables veterinary teams to safely increase the number of animals that can be sterilized in a given clinic setting.”

#### **ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION:**

This bill is opposed by *Top Cat Rescue*. They write: “Cats need all the help they can get but if HQHVSN field clinics, or MASH-style models are appropriate, those standards must be developed through the Veterinary Medical Board’s multidisciplinary advisory process — not through legislation that bypasses expert oversight.”

#### **POLICY ISSUE(S) FOR CONSIDERATION:**

*Continued Collaboration with the CVMB.* The CVMB, particularly through its Multidisciplinary Advisory Committee (MDC), have long-discussed additional ways to encourage low and no-cost sterilization in California, and to ease barriers to entry for licensees and stakeholders wishing to provide such services. Most recently, during the CVMB’s April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Board meeting, the MDC provided an update regarding MASH clinics, and potential recommendations for streamlining regulations to better support “pop-up” sterilization services. While deliberations are ongoing, the MDC recommends providing “specified exemptions for mobile veterinary premises from which services are solely provided at temporary “pop up” locations created for the purposes of high volume spay and neuter events.”

Further, Committee staff has received letters from stakeholders concerned that this bill may supersede the CVMB’s deliberative process, and may unintentionally create a “lower tier” of service for consumers who utilize MASH clinics. Nevertheless, the author and sponsors have demonstrated a continued commitment to collaborate with the CVMB through previous amendments and ongoing discussions in this Committee. As such, the author should continue to work with staff from the CVMB to ensure this bill strikes a balance between protecting animal patients and providing greater access to low-cost sterilization services.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES:**

*Services “In” a Registered Veterinary Premises.* According to materials provided to Committee staff, the author and sponsors put forward this bill to authorize MASH clinics in “community centers or other accessible public locations”. As currently written, however, this bill may prove to either be complicated or burdensome to implement in the intended settings. Specifically, by establishing that HQHVSN services be performed “in” a registered veterinary premises, this bill would require the respective setting where the MASH clinic is set up to register as a veterinary premises with the CVMB, including the required registration fee and application process, in order to take advantage of the exemptions. This extra administrative workload and cost may have an unintended chilling effect in identifying community partners to perform temporary MASH clinics. As such, the author should amend the bill to specify that the exemptions apply to facilities that either are registered veterinary premises, or are otherwise applicable to temporary settings where services are performed by a veterinarian employed or contracted with a veterinary premises to render HQHVSN services.

**AMENDMENTS:**

In order to address implementation concerns raised in the analysis, amend the bill as follows:

On page 2, after line 7:

(b) Notwithstanding any other law, high-quality, high-volume spay or neuter services performed *either* in a registered veterinary premises *premises, or by a veterinarian employed or contracted with a veterinary premises in a temporary setting*, shall not be required to ~~comply~~ *take place in a facility that complies* with any of the following standards:

- (1) A requirement for a separate room that is reserved for aseptic surgical procedures that require aseptic preparation.
- (2) A prohibition on open shelving in the area in which the aseptic surgical sterilization procedure is performed.
- (3) A requirement for equipment for viewing radiographs.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT:**

Animal Balance (*Co-Sponsor*)  
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) (*Co-Sponsor*)  
San Diego Humane Society and SPCA (*Co-Sponsor*)  
San Francisco SPCA (*Co-Sponsor*)  
Ace of Hearts Dog Rescue  
Animal Legal Defense Fund  
Animal Resource Center of the Inland Empire  
Animalsave  
Asap CATS  
Bay Area CATS  
Berkeley-east Bay Humane Society  
Best Friends Animal Society  
Better World Rescue  
California Animal Welfare Association  
City of Chowchilla  
City of Firebaugh  
City of Huron  
City of Kerman, CA  
City of Madera  
City of Mendota  
City of Rancho  
Cordova  
City of Reedley  
City of Sacramento  
City of San Joaquin  
County of Riverside  
Eastwood Ranch Foundation  
Forgotten Felines of Sonoma County  
Friends of Colusa County Animal Shelter

Frosted Faces Foundation  
Humane Society of Imperial County  
Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance (HUMANEVMA)  
Humane World for Animals  
Inland Valley Humane Society & SPCA  
Island Cat Resources and Adoption  
Joybound People & Pets  
Madera County Animal Services  
Norcal GSP Rescue  
Oakland Animal Services  
Orange County Animal Allies  
Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA  
Pets in Need  
Rancho Coastal Humane Society  
Ridgecrest Animal Shelter  
Sacramento SPCA  
Santa Barbara Humane Society  
Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter  
Sequoia Humane Society  
The Dancing Cat  
The Paw Mission  
Town of Apple Valley Animal Services  
Valley Humane Society

**REGISTERED OPPOSITION:**

Cats About Town  
Top Cat Rescue

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