

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS
AND KATHRYN BARGER

September 16, 2025

Save a Dog, Save A Life: Proclaiming October “Adopt a Shelter Dog Month” in Los Angeles County and Addressing the Immigration Impact on County Animal Care Centers

Los Angeles County continues to grapple with a persistent crisis in animal care and sheltering, marked by high intake volumes and capacity limits across our animal care centers. These trends are not occurring in isolation but are often driven by broader social and environmental forces—including displacement from immigration enforcement, housing insecurity, natural disasters, and climate emergencies.

When our communities suffer, so do the animals who live alongside them. Time and time again, County animal care staff have witnessed a ripple effect—whereby pets are surrendered, abandoned, or never reclaimed following moments of human crisis. In the wake of deportations, families may be forced to separate from their pets. During wildfires and other natural disasters, animals may arrive at shelters injured or disoriented, and tragically, some never reunite with their owners. These are not isolated anecdotes; they reflect deeper, systemic issues.

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In June 2025, as the height of the widespread immigration raids began targeting residents while at work, the impact of these raids also began to see the pets belonging to deported residents arriving at animal shelters throughout the County. Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC) began tracking data in mid-June to help identify the animals being surrendered or found as a stray due to their owners being deported. Although this data is fluid and dynamic, since June 10, 2025, there have been about 40 confirmed pets surrendered due to deportation, most of which are dogs. Over half of the animals that have been surrendered to the County animal care centers have been to DACC’s Baldwin Park Animal Care Center.

Animal abandonment and overcrowding are not animal problems—they are human problems with human causes. At a time when County animal care centers are regularly operating at or near capacity, and owner surrenders remain elevated, it is critical that we uplift awareness of the shared responsibility we have toward animal welfare. Recognizing that space is finite, every adoption becomes a life-saving act—one that not only gives a pet a second chance but also creates room for the next animal in need.

Furthermore, demographic trends reflect a cultural shift. Pet ownership is on the rise nationwide, especially among younger generations. According to the American Pet Products Association (APPA), 66% of U.S. households now own a pet, with dog

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ownership increasing significantly in the past five years. In fact, many millennials and Gen Z residents are choosing to raise dogs instead of having children, prompting a need for more structured public education on pet care. Recognizing this evolution in household composition, it is imperative that County departments—particularly LA County Library which is a knowledge access point—play a role in informing and supporting new and prospective pet owners.

The month-long effort to proclaim October as “Adopt-a-Shelter Dog Month” in Los Angeles County builds upon the 2024 inaugural County proclamation and continues to increase awareness, uplift adoption events, and highlight the impact of collective community compassion. The County also recognizes the importance of public education to reduce owner surrenders. A well-informed resident is more likely to adopt responsibly and retain their animal long-term. Additionally, starting positive encounters with animals at a young age fosters respect and empathy towards animals. Reading with an animal in a library setting provides a calming, positive experience for young children, teens and adults of all ages. In a study conducted by UC Davis, children reading 15 to 20 minutes per week to dogs that had been rescued from a local animal shelter had their reading fluency improve by 30%.

Los Angeles County has the opportunity to lead by example in elevating the connection between social well-being and animal welfare. When we uplift animals, we

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uplift people—and that community resilience includes the compassion we extend to all beings.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors suspend Section 22.1 of the Rules of the Board for the limited purpose of considering this motion.

WE, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors proclaim the month of October as Adopt a Shelter Dog Month, and:

1. Direct the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC) to hold two “Adopt a Shelter Dog” community adoption events in the month of October in each Supervisorial district, ensuring at least one of the events is coordinated with and hosted at an LA County Library location. Each event should, at minimum, be promoted broadly across social media and report back in writing within 60 days on the number of adoptions at these events.
2. Direct Chief Executive Office to:
 - a. promote the County’s proclamation of October being “Adopt a Shelter Dog Month” across all County internal and external promotional platforms; and
 - b. encourage County employees to adopt from a Los Angeles County animal care center facility.

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3. Direct Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) to post a graphic on DMH’s website and social media promoting October as “Adopt a Shelter Dog Month” with link to DACC’s animal care centers and provide background information on how pets benefit mental health.
4. Direct Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) to post a graphic on DPH’s website and social media promoting October as “Adopt A Shelter Dog Month” with link to DACC’s animal care centers and provide background information on how pets benefit health and wellness.
5. Direct LA County Library, in consultation with DACC, to:
 - a. highlight “Adopt A Shelter Dog Month” in each County library location with a display exhibiting helpful books for pet owners throughout the month of October; and
 - b. include books regarding pet ownership in replenishing book orders until each County library location contains a pet ownership collection in multiple languages applicable to the local community surrounding the library location; and at minimum, includes information on raising a pet from infancy/youth to end of life, signs of illness and household hazards and toxins that can impact household pets, and types of dog breeds, their lifestyle needs and common behavior.

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6. Direct LA County Library, in collaboration with DACC and applicable community partners, to explore the feasibility in expanding the “Read to a Dog” program to at least one library location per Supervisorial District and report back in writing within 180 days on the progress of the program. The program should provide resources to patrons on DACC services and resources and promote pet adoption.
7. Direct DACC, in collaboration with the Office of Immigrant Affairs in the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs, to implement a culturally and linguistically competent outreach campaign to promote shelter dog adoptions among immigrant families. This effort should include multilingual promotional materials and community outreach in trusted immigrant spaces, such as consulates, cultural festivals and fairs, and parks and other outdoor venues. The goal is to ensure that immigrant families have clear, accurate, and culturally relevant information about the joy and health benefits of adopting a shelter dog, as well as an understanding of the commitment to providing stable forever homes for adopted pets and the supportive pet owner resources available. Report back in writing within 90 days with a detailed plan and a progress update on the steps already taken to bring this effort to life.

AGN. NO. _____

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