

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 251

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 9, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Designates May of each year as “Pet Appreciation Month” and third full week of May of each year as “Pet Adoption Week” in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating May of each year as “Pet
2 Appreciation Month” and the third full week of May of each year
3 as “Pet Adoption Week” in New Jersey.
4

5 **WHEREAS**, Animals and pets have contributed to American life in
6 countless ways since before our country’s founding, as evidenced in
7 colonial-era art and written record; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Thousands of New Jersey households currently own, care
9 for, and enjoy the companionship of pets, including dogs, cats,
10 horses, reptiles, and other animals; and

11 **WHEREAS**, Pet ownership often offers increased opportunity for
12 exercise, through regular walking and playing, which has been
13 shown to have significant physical health benefits, including a
14 decrease in blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and triglyceride
15 levels; and

16 **WHEREAS**, Bonds between a pet owner and their animal can contribute
17 positively to mental health and mood by decreasing feelings of
18 loneliness and stress, and by offering opportunities for
19 socialization; and

20 **WHEREAS**, Observation of a “Pet Appreciation Month” would provide
21 pet owners with an additional reason to celebrate their pets and the
22 enrichment their pets bring to their lives; and

23 **WHEREAS**, Loving New Jersey households welcome thousands of pets
24 to their new “forever homes” each year, but more adopters are
25 needed to alleviate stress on animal shelters and rescues; and

26 **WHEREAS**, Many well-behaved and friendly pets are abandoned or
27 relinquished to animal shelters and rescues for reasons that are not
28 attributable to the animal, but are due to issues under human
29 control, such as the residential movement of families, the need for
30 families to comply with rental housing rules, or the need for
31 families to accommodate busy work schedules or new babies; and

32 **WHEREAS**, According to the New Jersey Department of Health’s
33 voluntary 2019 Animal Intake and Disposition Survey,
34 approximately 81,199 animals were admitted to animal shelters
35 across the State in 2019, and approximately 9,136 of those animals
36 were ultimately euthanized; and

37 **WHEREAS**, Best Friends Animal Society, a national organization and
38 leader in the no-kill animal shelter initiative, reports that only about
39 57 percent of New Jersey animal shelters are no-kill shelters; and

40 **WHEREAS**, Observation of a “Pet Adoption Week” would help to raise
41 awareness of the benefits of, and ongoing need for pet adoption and
42 pet fostering, and encourage the continued public support of, and
43 donation of items and funds to, local animal shelters and rescues in
44 the State; now, therefore,
45

46 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
47 *State of New Jersey:*

b. The third full week of May of each year is designated as “Pet Adoption Week” in New Jersey.

3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

While many loving households welcome new pets to their homes each year, and, while support for animal shelters and rescues continues to increase in the State, more adopters are needed to alleviate the burden on these shelter and rescue organizations. Well-behaved and friendly animals are, too often, forced to rely upon animal shelters and rescues for reasons that are not attributable to the animal, but are due to issues under human control such as the residential movement of families, the need for families to comply with rental housing rules, or the need for families to accommodate busy work schedules or new babies. According to the Department of Health's voluntary 2019 Animal Intake and Disposition Survey, approximately 81,199 animals were admitted to animal shelters across the State in 2019 and approximately 11 percent of those animals were euthanized. Moreover, according to the Best Friends Animal Society, a national organization and leader in the no-kill animal shelter initiative, only about 57 percent of New Jersey animal shelters are no-kill shelters. Observation of "Pet Adoption Week" would raise awareness of the benefits of, and need for increased pet adoptions and pet fostering, and encourage the continued public support of, and donation of items and funds to, local animal shelters and rescues in the State.