

**SENATE BILL 338 – SUPPORT**

**Senate Bill 338 – Animal Control Facilities – Adoption Fee Waiver for Veterans  
(Pets for Vets Act of 2021)  
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
February 2, 2021**

My name is Brian Smith. I am a gulf war era, 100% service-disabled combat Veteran and am writing to offer my strong support for **Senate Bill 338**.

As you know, this bill directs county or municipality animal control facilities to waive dog or cat adoption fees for Veterans with their “Veteran” status denoted on their motor vehicle administration identification card. While this will slightly impact revenues for these facilities, it **can directly and dramatically assist in saving the lives of both our Veterans and the animals!**

**Simply put, Vets save Pets, and Pets save Vets!** This legislation is a win-win-win, it helps save animals from shelters, it helps our disabled Veterans cope with life’s challenges, and it helps free up space in our shelters to allow them to rescue more animals.

Our Veterans are facing unprecedented challenges in fighting the hidden war at home due to the physical and mental ravages resulting from our Nation’s longest war. In fact, nearly one in five of our post-9/11 Veterans suffer from PTSD. That’s nearly 540,000 Veterans! Indeed, dogs and cats can make a difference in such Veterans’ mental and physical well-being.

As the wonderful nonprofit, “Pets For Vets” notes:

Many brave troops return home with scars – both seen and unseen – that make it difficult to transition back to civilian life. At the same time, millions of wonderful companion animals wait in shelters for a forever home.

When a Veteran is matched with the right pet, both lives change for the better. The Veteran saves and welcomes the pet into a loving home. The pet provides the Veteran with unconditional love and support, easing stress, depression, loneliness and anxiety. **Together, they share a bond that provides them both with a whole new “leash” on life.**

As a disabled combat Veteran, I can attest to the incalculable value that Tommy, my rescue Beagle, has added to my life, as I faced the mental and physical challenges resulting from my service.

Our Veterans are living testaments to the ideals of honor, service, and sacrifice. They deserve to enjoy the freedoms that they purchased for all of us through their selfless sacrifice on behalf of our Nation.

Consequently, we must support measures that help our Veterans live their lives with dignity and fulfillment. It is important to have programs and services that support their ability to lead productive, independent lives. **The “Pets for Vets Act of 2021” provides just such a program!**

**Save a Veteran, Save a Pet, and please move this important bill forward!**

**I respectfully request a favorable report for Senate Bill 338.**