

From: KECK, Elliot

Sent: 14 October 2020 16:44

Subject: Press Release: "Unnecessary bans" on pet ownership can be "discrimination"

NEWS RELEASE

From: Andrew Rosindell M.P. (Romford)

“Unnecessary bans” on pet ownership can be “discrimination”, says Andrew Rosindell M.P. in speech to Parliament

In a [speech](#) to the House of Commons today, **Andrew Rosindell M.P.** outlined his plans to bring an end to blanket “no pets” clauses in rented accommodation.

Speaking shortly after Prime Minister’s Questions, the former Shadow Minister of Animal Welfare described most bans or restrictions on pet ownership in rented accommodation to be “unnecessary.”

He said: “for those people who depend on the companionship of their dog, and who need that loving friend to be with them, especially those who live alone, such restrictions are nothing less than discrimination. Cruel to both the owner and the animal alike.”

Andrew continued: “My bill brings an end to this discrimination, making it a right for someone to own a dog or another domestic animal to live in their rented home, provided the owner demonstrates responsibility and care for the animal.”

The long standing animal loving M.P. is calling his bill “Jasmine’s Law”, after a dog called Jasmine, who was separated from a member of her family due to “restrictions imposed on tenants.” Although still living happily with the Adams family from Surrey, the M.P. said in the speech that Jordan Adams who had moved out of the family home, “would dearly love to accommodate Jasmine at his own home apartment, if only for a few days or when his mother goes on holiday”, but is unable to do so, due to a “no pets” clause in his tenancy.

The speech was delivered through a mechanism known as a Ten Minute Rule Bill, which gives backbench M.P.s opportunities to propose new legislation in a speech lasting no more than ten minutes. The bill has now passed its First Reading and has its Second Reading scheduled on 29 January 2021.

The legislation will require renters to demonstrate they are “responsible owners” with a suggested checklist including a vet’s confirmation that their pet is vaccinated, spayed/neutered, free of parasites and responsive to basic training commands in the case of dogs. Different requirements could be placed on cats and other pets. In cases where the renter can prove they are a “responsible owner”, and the accommodation is suitable for their pet, the right to take a pet into rented accommodation would be assumed.

The legislation is backed by some of Britain’s leading animal welfare organisations, including the RSPCA, Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, Dogs Trust, PAAW House, Cats Protection, AdvoCATSeastmids and Dogs on the Streets.

In a [column](#) in the Big Issue published today, Michelle Clark, Founder of Dogs on the Streets, wrote about the impact “no pets” clauses have on the homeless. She wrote that “homeless people are forced to choose between shelter and companionship” when they are offered social housing with “no pets” clauses attached.

A spokesman for the RSPCA said:

"The RSPCA is happy to support this Bill, which would be a big step forward for dog owning renters. With more people living in rented accommodation – whether private or social housing – the issue of the lack of dog friendly rental options is becoming an increasing problem for dog owners and animal welfare charities alike. We regularly hear from caring and responsible dog owners who are put in the heart breaking position of having to choose between their much loved pet and a home. It's not fair that anyone is put in this situation."

Deputy Chief Executive of Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, Peter Laurie said:

"Battersea welcomes Andrew Rosindell M.P. shining a spotlight on the issues faced by pet owners in rented accommodation – something we've highlighted with our own Pet Friendly Properties campaign.

We know the heartbreak owners feel when they're forced to give up their pets, as housing problems are the second biggest reason behind people bringing their pets to Battersea. One in five households in London now rent from social housing providers yet many animal lovers in these properties are deprived from owning a dog or cat, despite the key role animals play in helping to tackle loneliness and isolation."

Clare Kivlehan, Head of Outreach Projects at Dogs Trust said:

"We would like to thank Andrew Rosindell MP for raising this important issue in Parliament. Sadly, one of the main reasons for dogs being handed over to us is that their owners have had problems finding accommodation that will accept pets.

For more than 10 years we've been working with landlords, letting agencies and the property industry through our Lets With Pets Scheme to provide guidance and advice. We welcome steps to address 'no pet' clauses that too often force owners to part with their beloved pet".

Gabby Kuehn, Founder of PAAW House said:

"At PAAW House we believe that every pet deserves the right to a loving home and every human deserves the right to love a pet. We are therefore delighted that Andrew Rosindell MP has successfully introduced this important bill to parliament. We wholeheartedly support 'Jasmines Law' and look forward to doing anything we can to help Andrew make it a reality.

As new Build to Rent schemes continue to spring up in the UK offering luxury pet friendly accommodation to those who can afford it the divide between those who can and those who can't grows wider. Our pets don't care what we own or where we live as long as they have our love. In our opinion, tolerance, balance and good practice is all that's required. It's time to end pet discrimination."

Jen Berezai, Co-Founder of AdvoCATSeastmids said:

"AdvoCATS is pleased and proud to support Jasmine's Law, and to have contributed to the research behind it.

Too many pets who had perfectly good, loving homes are taking up precious space in shelters, or worse, being put to sleep as these same shelters are already bursting at the seams.

The first reading of this landmark bill is hopefully an important step towards the beginning of real change for those animal lovers whose only 'crime' is not being able to afford to buy their home."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Andrew Rosindell has been M.P. for Romford since 2001.

Andrew Rosindell was the Shadow Minister for Animal Welfare from 2007-2010 .

A Ten Minute Rule Bill is a type of Private Members' Bill that is introduced in the House of Commons under Standing Order No 23. The ten minute rule allows a backbench MP to make his or her case for a new Bill in a speech lasting up to ten minutes. An opposing speech may also be made before the House decides whether or not the Bill should be introduced. If the MP is successful the Bill is taken to have had its first reading.

The short title of the bill is: Dogs and Domestic Animals (Accommodation and Protection Bill); the full title is: a Bill to establish rights to keep dogs and other animals in domestic accommodation; to make provision about the protection of the welfare of dogs and other animals; and for connected purposes.