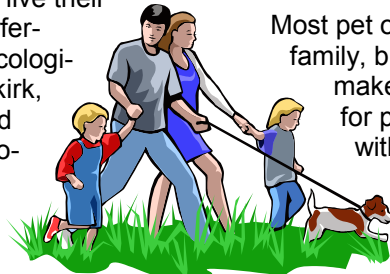


The secret agenda: abolish pet ownership!

“Animal guardian.” It sounds innocent enough. Animal rights activists all across America are lobbying to change local laws so that pet owners become “guardians.” The idea, they say, is to remind people that they are responsible for the animals in their care. But the agenda behind the guardian movement is to give animals legal standing to sue veterinarians, their owners, and others and to eventually end animal ownership altogether.

Children need **guardians**. Pets need **owners**. Referring to dog owners as “guardians” means that people who buy dogs do NOT own them. Guardians care for the property of someone else. So, who will own pets if everyone is a guardian? The STATE?

Animal rights activists don't believe pets should be property. They reject the idea that human beings should have control over an animal's care, housing and training. The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Statement on Companion Animals says that animals should live their lives “free of human interference...” as “part of the ecological scheme.” Ingrid Newkirk, PeTA's co-founder, called pet ownership “...an absolutely abysmal situation brought on by human manipulation.”



NAIA strongly opposes the concept of legal guardianship for pets. Here's why: Changing the law so that pets are no longer property is really the first step in the animal rights campaign to give animals the legal status of human beings.

Think for a moment about the practical consequences of giving human legal rights to animals:

- ⊙ It will clog the courts with frivolous cases brought by animal rights extremists on behalf of dogs, cats and other pets.
- ⊙ It will harm animals by creating confusion about who is responsible for their care.
- ⊙ It will make veterinary care so expensive that many animals will not receive it or will be prematurely euthanized.
- ⊙ It will lead to increasingly restrictive animal care laws and regulations.
- ⊙ It will limit the right of individuals to buy and sell pets as they choose.

The animal rights campaign to end pet ownership is contrary to everything we know about American society. Americans believe in property ownership, and we own millions of pets. According to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association, 62% of American households own at least one pet and 47% own more than one. These pet owners spend an estimated \$30 billion annually on their dogs, cats, fish, birds, rodents and reptiles because they love their animals, and want to provide the best possible care for them.

Most pet owners consider their pets part of the family, but they also know that legal ownership makes them directly and legally responsible for pet care, protects pets from confiscation without cause, and preserves their rights to feed, house, train, care for and interact with their pets in ways that strengthen the human-animal bond.

Scientific research has confirmed the value of that bond to humans and animals alike.

NAIA strongly supports laws that preserve our right to own pets, recognize acceptable animal care practices based on sound veterinary science, clearly define animal cruelty and neglect, and hold animal owners fully accountable for animal welfare violations.

In the animal rights view, that's not enough. Wayne Pacelle, now vice-president of the Humane Society of the US, once said, “We have no problem with the extinction of domestic animals...one generation and out.”

Another animal rights group said in a 1991 article, “Liberating our language by eliminating the word ‘pet’ is the first step...In an ideal society where all exploitation and oppression has been eliminated, it will be (our) policy to oppose the keeping of animals as pets.”*

The next time you hear animal rights activists calling for a guardianship change in local laws, pay close attention. Your right to own a pet could be at stake.

* New Jersey Animal Rights Alliance, “Should Dogs Be Kept As Pets? NO!” *Good Dog!* Feb. 1991.

