



# LETICIA CASTILLO

## 58TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

### **Assembly Bill 1382: Ethics Over Aesthetics Act**

#### **SUMMARY**

AB 1382, the Ethics Over Aesthetics Act, will ban the importation for profit or sale of genetically modified animals produced using intentional genomic alteration, a highly experimental process that endangers animal welfare, when done solely to enhance superficial consumer appeal.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Driven by advancements in genetic modification technologies, intentional genomic alteration of animals has become a frontier for development. While investments have been made to further this endeavor for potentially beneficial medical advancements, some companies have begun the development of genetically modified cats, dogs, and other pets with altered appearances to fulfil consumer demand for "designer" traits, despite unknown long-term health risks. These genetic modifications run the risk of prioritizing aesthetics over the well-being of the animal, as well as drive consumer demand for novelty pets when there already exists a pet overpopulation crisis.

#### **ISSUE**

A February 19, 2025 article published by Wired details a startup, the Los Angeles Project, created with the goal of using clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats (CRISPR) and restriction enzyme mediated integration (REMI) technologies to create genetically modified animals, from glow-in-the-dark rabbits to unicorns. The company has already been experimenting on embryos from frogs, fish, hamsters, and rabbits to produce these outcomes for the express purpose of creating fantastical pets for consumer purchase.

While intentional genomic alteration can be used to enhance the interactions between animals and humans—including creating hypoallergenic pets or allowing for the use of animal organs in human organ transplantation—the premise of genomic alteration for aesthetic purposes raises numerous bioethical concerns. Such modifications have the potential to result in deformities, chronic pain, and other severe medical conditions without any articulable societal benefit.

As a state with a history of working to protect animal welfare and ensuring scientific development occurs responsibly, it is vital for California to proactively take legislative action to prevent the proliferation of designer pets at the expense of animals, as well as prevent our state's already burdened animal shelters from taking on more unwanted animals.

#### **THE BILL**

AB 1382 will prohibit the importation for profit, sale, or offer for sale of pet animals genetically altered for non-health-related reasons, while continuing to permit genetic modifications if such changes directly benefit the health of the animal or enhance its relationship with humans. The bill will establish a civil penalty of at least \$5,000 per violation to deter unethical breeding practices.

AB 1382 reaffirms California's commitment to animal welfare and ethical science by ensuring that genetic modifications in pets serve a legitimate, ethical purpose—not profit-driven cosmetic experiments.

---

**SPONSOR**

Nick Sackett

Director of Legislative Affairs, Social Compassion in Legislation

[nick@socialcompassion.org](mailto:nick@socialcompassion.org)

**STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION**

Harrison Zea

Legislative Director, Office of Assemblywoman Leticia Castillo

[harrison.zea@asm.ca.gov](mailto:harrison.zea@asm.ca.gov)