

“Although a semantic change, the use of the term ‘guardian,’ rather than ‘owner,’ will encourage a more responsible relationship between pets and those who care for them.”

Matt Gonzalez, Former President  
San Francisco Board of Supervisors

# whyguardian?

It is my sincere belief that the result of increased numbers of people thinking and acting as ‘guardians’ of their animal companions will lead to fewer cases of abuse, neglect and abandonment, and to fewer animals being killed in our nation’s shelters.

Carl Friedman, Director  
*San Francisco Department of Animal Care & Control*

The word ‘owner’ is outdated and doesn’t reflect the human/animal bond that exists in our culture today. The word ‘guardian’ denotes a higher level of responsibility towards another being. Although it is a simple language change that does not alter the legal status of animals as property, we hope that the increased awareness of the ‘guardian’ language will elevate the status of animals in our community. We will use the word ‘guardian’ as another tool to fight animal abuse and exploitation.

Jan McHugh-Smith, Executive Director  
*San Francisco SPCA*

Everything we do to enhance the human/animal bond minimizes the likelihood of an animal being relinquished. I support ‘guardianship’ language as a powerful shift in the way we speak and think about the companion animals who share our lives. By truly understanding what it means to be a guardian, more animals will be adopted and rescued. The guardianship initiative is leading to a better quality of life for animals as individuals, not as property.

Ed Boks, Executive Director  
*Los Angeles Animal Care & Control*

The term ‘guardian’ accurately describes the relationship of perpetual care that is needed to teach children respect, compassion and kindness for domestic pets. Studies show that children who learn compassion and respect for animals have a better chance at becoming compassionate adults, responsible community members, and are less likely to behave violently towards others.

Edwin J. Sayres, President  
*American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*