



Let your commitment to homeless Animals live on through a bequest to the Humane Society of Boulder Valley.

Dear Friends:

The Humane Society of Boulder Valley requested that Boulder City Council consider changing the word "owner" to "guardian" in our local animal care and control ordinance. Changing to the word "guardian" does not change the legal status of animals as property. The sole purpose of this change is to influence the public for the positive treatment of animals. The word "guardian" denotes a higher level of responsibility toward another sentient being. In this case, we want people to act in the best interest of animals.

It is a simple language change, but we believe that the way we speak reflects the way we act. Cruelty to animals must be fought on many different levels, through laws, enforcement, prosecution, and education; they all must work in concert to affect change. There is power in the use of words. Language has been used to fight for change in other social movements such as the treatment of minorities, woman, and children who were once considered property. People ridiculed gender-neutral language, and today is it a part of our daily speech.

Animals deserve better consideration than property. Today they are categorized the same as inanimate objects -- things. Changing the language to pet guardian hurts no one, citizens will still own their animals, but over time the word may help to change people's attitudes about animals.

Critics stated that the word change reflects social engineering. If social engineering includes changing people's attitudes, then we will work towards this goal. It is our mission to protect animals. The word "owner" is outdated and doesn't reflect the humane/animal bond that exists in our culture today. We want a caretaker, or guardian to consider their animal as a sentient being rather than property.

Times are changing; Boulder City Council took a progressive stance and changed the word "owner" to "guardian" in our animal care and control ordinance. It is a small change, but we hope that over time it will accord animals better treatment in our society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan McHugh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jan McHugh
Executive Director