

Sy Howard Legislative Fund

by George Eigenhauser

Your contribution to the Sy Howard Legislative Fund is for protecting CFA, cat fanciers, cats, and cat owners from federal, state and local legislation sought by those who would ban or restrict our hobby and our rights. The fund was created by the CFA Board of Directors in 1991 as the “CFA Legislative Fund” to encourage contributions from individuals, organizations, or clubs to deal with legislation affecting the activities of cat breeders and owners. In 1998 it was renamed the Sy Howard Legislative Fund” to honor the memory of a wonderful man who served as CFA’s legal counsel for many years. His dedication to CFA and the concern and caring he extended to all of the CFA’s members should be remembered as the ideal for all cat fanciers to emulate as we go forward.”

The Sy Howard Fund supplements CFA’s regular, budgeted legislative expenditure. Sy Howard money may be used in one of two ways. It can provide matching funds for groups and clubs to address legislation affecting them such as: breeding restrictions, pet sales bans, limit laws, etc. The fund is also used (without matching) to support CFA participation with other groups, primarily national in scope, and in legislative events.

Matching funds from Sy Howard may be available to help local groups and clubs working on legislative projects that meet the goals of the fund. Past examples of approved use of the matching funds include: newspaper ads opposing local legislation; legislative workshops; productions of flyers, buttons and signage; information packets to educate legislators; sponsoring speakers at events; shelter demographic studies; hiring lobbying professionals; television issue ads; or other projects as may be approved by the CFA Legislative Committee. Clubs or individuals who wish to submit a project for consideration must submit a written request to the CFA Legislative Committee, to the attention of the Chairperson (currently George Eigenhauser) who can assist you in preparing a proposal.

Sy Howard funds are also used on a non-matching basis by CFA to provide support and/or to maintain a presence in other related groups. Non-matching funds may be used to pay for CFA’s presence at animal welfare and animal rights meetings and seminars, veterinary conferences, pet industry meetings and other events to maintain and project awareness of CFA’s interests and views on legislation.

For the past 19 years the Sy Howard Fund has been used to sponsor Pet Night on Capitol Hill, sometimes with matching funds from local clubs. Pet Night has been our opportunity to maintain contact with members of congress, their aides, top representatives and the media. It also allows networking among Pet Night sponsors about issues important to the companion animal industry.

Non-matching funds have been used to co-sponsor a law school writing contest by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), through its Legal Outreach Program (LOP). Many “animal law” programs are dominated by Animal Rights interests. The goal of the writing contest is to open law students’ minds to the view that animal law and animal rights are not the same. The AKC was also a sponsor of the contest and has taken the lead for our next round of competition later this year.

While legislative activity too often involves opposition to harmful proposals, CFA does support laws which encourage humane animal use and ownership. We are for people to have access to the pet of their choice, whether from a shelter, rescue, or breeder. We want to preserve pet ownership rights and protections. We want people to have their choice in their veterinary options. We support voluntary cat identification, fair animal cruelty laws, humane treatment of ALL cats whether owned or community cats, spay/neuter and early age altering of cats not necessary for breeding, and of course we support responsible breeding and ownership of cats.

A more complete description of the Sy Howard Legislative Fund, along with how to apply for support, may be found at: www.cfa.org/Portals/0/documents/legislative/SyHowardFund2012.pdf.

Donations to the Legislative Fund can be made online on the CFA web site. You can either go to the “legislative” pull down tab and click on “legislative fund donations” or go to the CFA catalog under “donations” or use this link directly: <http://catalog.cfa.org/donations.shtml#legislative>

Checks can be made out to the “CFA/Sy Howard Legislative Fund” and mailed to the CFA Central Office. Any contribution can make a world of difference in assuring that breeding and exhibiting of pedigreed cats, and pet ownership, will still be possible in the future.

ⁱ Please note that the Sy Howard Legislative Fund is NOT a charity. It is used to engage in legislative activity to protect the rights of cat breeders and owners. Donations to the fund are NOT tax deductible.

ⁱⁱ Resolution before the delegation at the 1998 CFA Annual Meeting.

ⁱⁱⁱ CFA expended \$79,834.59 on legislation in FY 2016-2017, in addition to the Sy Howard funding.

