



HUMANE
Society of Louisiana



Defenders Circle

Dear Friend:

February 2023

Thank you so much for your kind support this and every month. The cruelty complaints pour into our office every day, but because of your kindness, we're making great strides for the animals who rely on us.

Fighting for Louisiana's Animals at the Highest Levels of Government



One of our group's long standing goals is to lobby for better animal protection laws and policies, both at the local and state levels. In fact, we've been lobbying at the state capitol for almost every year since 1987. We've drafted and helped pass more than a dozen important state animal protection bills. This year, we are stepping up our game to address the widespread problems facing Louisiana's cats and dogs. Last year, for the first time, our state had an enormous budget surplus of hundreds of millions of dollars, so we worked to set aside critically needed government funding for animal shelters. To help the

animals in dozens of parishes without facilities, and to complement woefully underfunded programs in other communities, we asked lawmakers to set aside two million dollars last year to create a *Louisiana Animal Shelter Support Fund*. Senator Louise Bernard (R- 31st District) spearheaded this effort and was able to add our request to the appropriations bill, only to see it excluded before session ended. It was a heartbreaking setback, especially at a time of such need. This year, to increase our odds of passing this important appropriations amendment, we began our lobbying effort several months ago, and we have already made some significant progress. Both Dr. Mike Strain, Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry, and Clay Schexnayer, Speaker of the House, have signaled their support of this initiative and have pledged to help us pass this bill. We also approached the governor's office and were subsequently contacted by senior staff members of Governor John Bel Edwards. We recently attended the first of two meetings on the subject, which was attended by key officials, including the Governor's Chief of Staff. We have been asked to help create a white paper, outlining funding needs for public shelters. We are very excited about the possibility of what we can accomplish this year. The Louisiana legislative session starts on April 10th, and we will keep you informed of our progress.



HSLA recently met with key members of Governor John Bel Edwards' staff, along with other top state government officials and legislators. We're pleased to report that everyone in attendance agreed about the scope and seriousness of the problems facing companion animals in Louisiana; all expressed a commitment to seeking out funding mechanisms to support public shelters.



We thought you'd enjoy some of these Valentine's Day puppy pics as much as we did! We're so happy to be able to rescue little ones like these from overcrowded shelters.