

## Six states seek ban on gas euthanasia of shelter animals

By Andrew Seaman  
Special to USA TODAY

Six states are considering proposals to ban carbon monoxide gas chamber use in animal shelters as a means of euthanasia, in response to animal rights supporters who say the process is inhumane.

Georgia, Illinois, North Carolina, New York, West Virginia and Pennsylvania have legislation pending, according to Kimberley Intino, director of the Shelter Services Program for the Humane Society of the United States. Twelve states already ban it, she says.

Death by CO poisoning can be slow and terrifying," says Daphna Nachminovitch, vice president of cruelty investigations for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. "During the process, which can take 30 minutes, panicked animals may gasp for breath, try to claw out of the chamber, and even attack each other."

Intino says that in her six years at the humane society, this is the first time multiple states have introduced legislation banning euthanasia by carbon monoxide gas chambers. She says the humane society is "incredibly involved" in advocating legislation to protect animals.

The new legislation is being met with some opposition from veterinary medical groups. Jane Williston, president of the North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association, acknowledges injection is the preferred method, but she says there is a danger using it on aggressive feral animals. "Dogs and cats in shelters, most often, are not of the same temperament, and you are not in the same controlled environment that you are in your veterinarian hospital.

### Using other methods

Twelve states currently ban carbon monoxide gas chamber use as a means of animal euthanasia.

Arizona	Maryland
Arkansas	New Jersey
California	Oregon
Delaware	Rhode Island
Florida	Tennessee
Maine	Virginia

Source: The Humane Society of the United States

... There is nothing kind, gentle or stress-free about it," she says.

The method is either legal or not referenced in state laws governing animal euthanasia in 37 states and the District of Columbia, Intino says.

Virginia became the latest state to stop using gas chambers in 2008, Intino says. More states are looking at it, she says, because "the general public, as well as the people working specifically in animal welfare, are just simply becoming more educated about carbon monoxide as a form of euthanasia."

Illinois state Sen. Heather Steans, a Democrat, says she introduced a bill in January to ban the practice after someone from the humane society approached her about it.

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) guidelines list the gas-chamber method as a "conditionally acceptable agent and method of euthanasia."

Legislation in the six latest states is either in committee or awaiting votes. Among those states, the Georgia VMA says it supports national AVMA guidelines, and New York's says it is neutral.

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