

# **A Survey Of Public Attitudes Toward Establishing A Low Cost Spay-Neuter Program For Low Income Pet Owners In Maryland**

**Additional Findings Requested From  
And Prepared For  
The Maryland Spay/Neuter Task Force Commission  
November 28, 2012**

**E. Joseph Lamp, Ph.D.**

**With data collected for the Commission by  
The Center For The Study Of Local Issues  
Anne Arundel Community College  
Fall, 2012**

**Purpose:**

The analyses included in this report attempt to provide answers to additional questions posed by Mr. Patrick McMillan and Dr. Barbara McLean, members of the Maryland Spay/Neuter Task Force Commission, raised at the commission's November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. The questions are as follows:

- 1) What was the overall incidence of pet ownership by those responding to the survey?
- 2) Of those respondents who supported the creation of a low cost spay neuter program, what percent of those were pet owners?
- 3) Of those owning dogs or cats, what percent supported the following:
  - a. Paying an extra dollar or two when getting pet rabies shots?
  - b. Paying an extra penny or two when buying pet food?
  - c. Paying an extra dollar or two added to your annual state income tax?
  - d. Paying an extra dollar or two when renewing pet licenses?

**Survey Questions Included on AACC-CSLI Survey:**

The questions appearing on the October, 2012 AACC-CSLI survey pertaining to these issues are again provided here for clarity, in Table 1 and Table 2. They are identical to those presented in the main report.

**Table 1**  
Questions As Asked On CSLI-Biannual Survey – Fall, 2012

**7.0 Maryland is considering a program to subsidize low-cost spaying and neutering for low income pet owners to lessen the problem of stray dogs and cats.**

**Do you support or oppose the creation of such a program?**

(1) Support If SUPPORT go to question 7.1 below

(2) Oppose  
(3) Unsure (0) No answer

If Oppose, Unsure or  
No answer go to  
question 8 next page

If "SUPPORT" for question 7, ask: **Do you support or oppose the following ideas for financing this program...**

Paying an extra...	Support	Maybe	Oppose	N.A.
7.1. Dollar or two when getting pet rabies shots?	1	2	3	0
7.2. Penny or two when buying pet food?	1	2	3	0
7.3. Dollar or two added to your annual state income tax?	1	2	3	0
7.4. Dollar or two when renewing pet licenses?	1	2	3	0

**Table 2**

**22.1. Do you currently own a dog or a cat? Yes (2) No (0) No answer**

**Results:**1. **Mr. McMillan's request:**

***What was the overall incidence of pet ownership by those responding to the survey?***

Over half of the survey population (56.2%) currently owned a dog or cat. See **Table 3.**

**Table 3**

Do you currently own a dog or a cat?

Yes	No
56.2% (277)	43.8% (217)

2. **Dr. McLean's requests:**

***a. Of those respondents who supported the creation of a low cost spay neuter program, what percent of those were pet owners?***

Approximately 8 out of 10 (79.7%) of the respondents currently owning a dog or cat supported the creation of a low cost spay neuter program. Furthermore, commonly accepted statistical analysis used for inference testing from these data indicate very strong significant differences among the subgroups (chi square = 10.237 p<.001). See **Table 4.**

**Table 4**

Do you support or oppose the creation of a program to subsidize low-cost spaying and neutering for low income pet owners to lessen the problem of stray dogs and cats?

Responses from:	Support	Oppose
1. Those <u>currently</u> owning a dog or cat	79.7% (208)	20.3% (53)
2. Those <u>NOT currently</u> owing a dog or cat	66.5% (133)	33.5% (67)

***b. Of those owning dogs or cats, what percent supported paying an extra dollar or two when getting pet rabies shots?***

Almost 9 out of 10 (88.5%) respondents currently owning a dog or cat supported paying an extra dollar or two for such a program, when getting pet rabies shots. Again, commonly accepted statistical analysis used for inference testing from these data indicate very strong significant differences among the subgroups (chi square = 10.909 p<.004). See **Table 5** on next page.

**Table 5**

If you support the creation of such a program, do you support or oppose paying an extra dollar or two when getting pet rabies shots?

Responses from:	Support	Maybe	Oppose
1. Those currently owing a dog or cat	88.5% (192)	3.2% (7)	8.3% (18)
2. Those NOT currently owning a dog or cat	75.2% (100)	5.3% (7)	19.5% (26)

**c. *Of those owning dogs or cats, what percent supported paying an extra penny or two when buying pet food?***

Almost 8 out of 10 (78.7%) respondents currently owning a dog or cat supported paying an extra penny or two for such a program when buying pet food. Commonly accepted statistical analysis used for inference testing from these data indicate very strong significant differences among the subgroups (chi square = 6.626 p<.036). See **Table 6**.

**Table 6**

If you support the creation of such a program, do you support or oppose paying an extra penny or two when buying pet food?

Responses from:	Support	Maybe	Oppose
1. Those currently owing a dog or cat	78.7% (170)	3.7% (8)	17.6% (38)
2. Those NOT currently owning a dog or cat	67.2% (88)	8.4% (11)	24.4% (32)

**d. *Of those owning dogs or cats, what percent supported paying an extra dollar or two added to your state income tax?***

Respondents currently owning a dog or cat were almost evenly divided over whether they supported (48.6%) or opposed (47.7%) paying an extra dollar or two added to on their state income tax to support such a program. Their responses were almost statistically identical to those who did not own a pet (43.7% support, and 50.4% opposed) yielding no statistically significant differences overall (chi square = 2.537, p<.469), with neither group showing strong support for this option. See **Table 7**.

**Table 7**

If you support the creation of such a program, do you support or oppose paying an extra dollar or two added to your state income tax?

Responses from:	Support	Maybe	Oppose
1. Those currently owing a dog or cat	48.6% (104)	3.7% (8)	47.7% (102)
2. Those NOT currently owning a dog or cat	43.7% (59)	5.2% (7)	50.4% (68)

e. ***Of those owning dogs or cats, what percent supported paying an extra dollar or two added when renewing pet licenses?***

Over 7 out of 10 (76.1%) respondents currently owning a dog or cat supported paying an extra dollar or two when renewing pet licenses. Their responses were almost statistically identical to those who did not own a pet, with over 7 out of 10 (72.7%) of that group, too, supporting this method of funding. There were no overall statistically significant differences (chi square = 1.64, p<.440), with both groups showing strong support for this option. See **Table 8**.

**Table 8**

If you support the creation of such a program, do you support or oppose paying an extra dollar or two when renewing pet licenses?

Responses from:	Support	Maybe	Oppose
1. Those currently owing a dog or cat	76.1% (162)	5.6% (12)	18.3% (39)
2. Those NOT currently owning a dog or cat	72.7% (93)	3.9% (5)	23.4% (30)

**Conclusions:**

What conclusions can be drawn from these additional analyses that may help the decision-making of the spay/neuter task force?

Slightly more survey respondents reported that they currently owned dogs or cats than those who did not. However, whether they are pet owners or not appears to have little impact on their support for both the development of a low cost spay neuter program for low income pet owners – or how to pay for it. Here's why.

First, majority support for the program comes from both groups: 1) pet owners and; 2) those who don't own pets. Almost 8 out of 10 respondents owning dogs and cats support the initiative, and 6 out of 10 respondents not owning dogs and cats do so, too.

Second, the supporting evidence is even more compelling when considering how to pay for it among those who would most likely be exclusively bearing the cost: current dog and cat owners.

Taking each suggested funding option in turn: 1) Almost 9 out of 10 dog or cat owners support paying an extra dollar or two for the cost of a rabies shot; 2) Almost 8 out of 10 dog and cat owners support paying an extra penny or two when buying pet food; 3) Over 7 out of 10 dog and cat owners support paying an extra dollar or two when renewing pet licenses; 4) There is much less support (5 out of 10) among dog and cat owners for paying an extra dollar or two added to their annual state income tax.

Clearly, the main report of these survey findings previously provided to the commission, along with these additional finding demonstrate two things. First, there is very strong public support for establishing such a program in Maryland, especially among dog and cat owners. Second there is also very strong support for three of the four key options suggested for funding it – all of which would only financially impact current owners of dog and cats in Maryland.