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State Representative Harry Benton (97th)

Benton “Pets for Vets” Bill Becomes Law

SPRINGFIELD, ILL. – Military veterans in Illinois will soon be able to take in adoptable pets free of charge under a bill passed by state Rep. Harry Benton, D-Plainfield, that recently became law.

“If you had to come up with two things the vast majority of Americans probably agree on, I think honoring and supporting veterans and helping adoptable pets find families would be two really good guesses,” Benton said. “Pets for Vets is a policy which does both those things, by pairing our amazing veterans with loving pets in need of homes, free of charge.”

Benton’s House Bill 2500 provides that a person who can show proof of both veteran status and Illinois residency can adopt a dog or cat from an animal shelter or animal control facility, and the shelter or facility shall not charge the veteran an adoption fee. Shelters and facilities may limit the number of fees waived to one fee per veteran every two years.

The bill was signed into law by Gov. J.B. Pritzker on Aug. 4 and takes effect Jan. 1, 2024.

“Too many adoptable pets remain in shelters and rescues instead of finding loving homes and families whose lives they can enrich in the way only a pet can,” Benton said. “Meanwhile, who are more deserving of having their lives enriched for no charge than our veterans? This was one of those rare opportunities to do two good things at once, and I took it.”

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