

COMPANION ANIMAL LAW

# WRITING CONTEST

➡ **FIRST PRIZE: \$2,500**  
Second prize: \$500

➡ **OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS**  
enrolled at ABA-accredited law schools in the U.S.

➡ **SMALL, 8-PAGE MINIMUM**  
writing requirement

➡ **ENTRIES DUE OCT. 31, 2017**



Photo by AKC

FOR CONTEST RULES AND TOPICS, GO TO:

**WRITEABOUTANIMALLAW.COM**

A Collaboration of the American Kennel Club®, Cat Fanciers Association®, American Veterinary Medical Association®, and Animal Health Institute.

# Companion Animal Legal Writing Competition Rules

## Prize

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1<sup>st</sup> place: \$2,500 cash prize

2<sup>nd</sup> place: \$500 cash prize

## Eligibility

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Participants must be currently enrolled at an American Bar Association-accredited law school located in the United States. Entrants may participate in the writing of only one entry per contest. The names of entrants will be held in confidence until the judging of entries has been completed.

## Form

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Entries must contain original work done exclusively by a single author. No paper that has been previously published in any form shall be considered. Papers must be formatted as follows:

- Double-spaced, 8 ½ x 11 inch size papers with one-inch margins.
- Typed in 12-pt. Times New Roman font.
- 8-15 pages in length.
- Include single-space 10-pt. Times New Roman font footnotes (not endnotes)
- Use citation format commonly used in your individual discipline.

Entrants are required to complete and return a cover sheet and certification page with his or her essay, which must include:

- Entrant's full name, address (mail and email), and telephone number.
- Name of school and year of study.
- Date of submission of paper.
- Certification that the submission is original, has not had prior publication in any form, it will not be submitted for publication elsewhere, and that the entrant transfers all rights, title, and ownership interests in the submission to the sponsors.

**Submissions that do not comply with all of the requirements above will not be accepted.**

## Topics

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Please select **one** of the topics provided below.

Companion animals have long been recognized by the law as personal property. When an owner brings suit for loss of a pet or injury to a pet, the damages are calculated under property principles, which may cap recovery at fair market value. Several states courts and legislatures have been willing to accept claims requesting damages beyond a pet's market value, including for reasonable and necessary veterinary costs that are above market value and for a pet's "actual value" which can include economic factors besides market value. A few states have allowed emotion-based claims when a pet is maliciously injured or killed, but nearly all states have

rejected claims for emotional distress, pain and suffering, sentimental value, loss of companionship and other non-economic damages in negligence claims involving harm to pets. Discuss the causes of action and types of damages above with relation to companion animals. What types of situations would give rise to lawsuits over animal injuries? What are the benefits and disadvantages of allowing expanded liability in these situations? What would be the net impact on pet welfare?

OR

Pet custody has become a highly dynamic area of the law. Under the traditional view, which is reflected in most state laws, companion animals are considered personal property. In recent years, some courts have started changing how they handle pet custody in family law cases, such as divorce. When a couple separates, the pet is traditionally allocated to one of its owners. It may be determinative if the pet was a gift from one of the owners to the other. In recent years, courts have been experimenting with different types of solutions, including split custody and assessing the best interests of the pet. Custody issues also arise with law enforcement, when the police or animal control take custody of a pet that has been severely neglected and is in need of immediate medical attention. Comparable issues arise when a local shelter takes custody of a pet found in the street. Discuss the relevant law surrounding pet custody, the potential limits on ownership interests in pets, and the pros and cons of changing the law.

## **Deadlines**

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Submissions must be either emailed or post-marked no later than 6pm on October 31, 2017.

## **Submission**

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Submissions may be emailed to the American Kennel Club at [Christina.Wickson@akc.org](mailto:Christina.Wickson@akc.org) by the deadline. Entries can be sent as Microsoft Word or PDF documents. Email copies are preferred, but hardcopies are also accepted. Mailing address:

American Kennel Club  
Law Student Writing Competition  
Attn: Christina Wickson  
8051 Arco Corporate Drive, Suite 100  
Raleigh, NC 27617

Include:

- Cover Sheet & Certification page
- Paper analysis of one of the specific topics listed.

## **Judges and Standards**

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Submissions will be judged by members of the legal and public policy professions with expertise in laws impacting companion animals. All points of view are welcome. The following factors will be considered: demonstrated knowledge of the topic, application of legal principles, effective use of proper authorities, strength of logic and reasoning, originality, and conclusions of future impact. In addition, consideration will be given to technical aspects such as: organization, citations, proper format, and overall clarity.

The decision of the judges is final.

The sponsors have authority to make all decisions as to submission eligibility and/or compliance with the contest's requirements. All such decisions are final and not appealable.

First and second place winning submissions will be published on the American Kennel Club's website and announced through various communication channels of the supporting sponsors.

## **Notification**

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All entrants will receive a letter or email recognizing their participation and any prize awarded by December 1, 2017.

## **Recognition**

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The following organizations are sponsors of the Companion Animal Legal Writing Competition: the [American Kennel Club](#), the [Cat Fanciers' Association](#), the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#), and the [Animal Health Institute](#).

## **For More Information**

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Please contact **Christina Wickson** at [Christina.Wickson@akc.org](mailto:Christina.Wickson@akc.org).