

BOARD OFFICERS

Catherine Swysen
President

Luz Reyes-Martin
(On Leave)
Carol Keator (Acting)
VP Policy

Leslie Brtek
VP Organization

ej Borah
Secretary

Lisa Guravitz
CFO

BOARD MEMBERS

Vicki Allen

Diana Cecala

Danielle De Smeth

Pamela Flynt Tambo

Elsa Granados

Charlotte Gullap-Moore

Hathor Hammett

Beverly Herbert

Jacqueline Inda

Carol Keator

Sandy Kievman

Andria Martinez-Cohen

Max Rorty

PAST PRESIDENTS

Gayle Binion

Barbara Lindemann

Lois Phillips

Carole Piceno

Susan Rose

Hannah-Beth Jackson

Margaret Connell

Helene Schneider

Janet Barron

Alissa Hummer

Sharon Hoshida

Lisa Guravitz

Mary O'Gorman

Beth Schneider

Jane Gray

Carol Keator



Celebrating 29 Years of Empowering Women

May 8, 2017

Honorable Katherine Clark
1415 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Email: marylizkelleher@mail.house.gov

RE: HR 909 Pet and Women Safety Act of 2017 (Clark) - SUPPORT

Dear Congresswoman Clark,

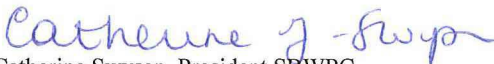
On behalf of the Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee (SBWPC), I am writing to express support for HR 909, addressing legislation to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets. SBWPC's mission is dedicated to furthering gender equality and other feminist values through political and social action and educational activities, and is one of the largest women's political committees in Santa Barbara County. We advocate for a diverse set of positions that include "ending crimes perpetuated against women that have at their root an intersection between sexism and other forms of oppression," (<http://sbwpc.org/positions-new/>) including abusing women's pets as a source of control.

SBWPC believes that women should not have to make a decision between finding safety for themselves or staying behind to protect their pets, and therefore, we support amending the federal criminal code to broaden the definition of stalking to include conduct that causes a person to experience a reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury to her or his pet. Because SBWPC endorses a feminist approach to the humane treatment of all living beings, we also agree with HR 909 that grants should be awarded to emergency and transitional shelters to provide assistance to survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and/or stalking - and their pets. Since January 1, 2016, the FBI has been collecting statistical data tracking acts of cruelty against animals because research indicates a correlation between animal cruelty and sexual and domestic violence, child abuse, and murder. In fact, cruelty to animals is considered to be a significant predictor of future violence. Research has found that a perpetrator's first target is often an animal; the second is a spouse, girlfriend, acquaintance, or a child (<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/-tracking-animal-cruelty>).

Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee regards HR 909 as an important step forward in helping to eliminate the unconscionable "crimes against women and their pets found in our families, the media, in our schoolyards and college campuses, and in our workplaces."

Thank you for reviewing our organization's position on this issue. Should you wish to communicate further with us, please email us at info@sbwpc.org or visit our website: www.sbwpc.org.

Sincerely,


Catherine Swysen, President SBWPC

cc: House Judiciary Committee, Chair Bob Goodlatte, Fax: (202) 225-9681
cc: House Agriculture Committee, Chair Mike Conaway, Fax: (202) 225-4464
cc: Santa Barbara Rape Crisis Center, email: karla@sbccc.net
cc: Congressman Carbajal, max.hokit@mail.house.gov