

January 28, 2018

ORAL TESTIMONY

Re: HB 2477
House Agriculture Committee

Dear Chair Hoffman and Members of the Committee:

I am writing you today to ask that you **OPPOSE** HB 2477, a bill to raise fees for the Animal Facility Inspection Program (AFI).

My name is Kimberly Pugliese and I am a Board Member for Beauties and Beasts, Inc., Wichita, Kansas.

For the last five (5) years, the Department of Agriculture has tried to raise fees on animal shelters. For the last three (3) years, I have travelled to Topeka to meet with legislatures asking them to oppose these fee increases. Each year, the Department of Agriculture's bills have been defeated. In fact, the legislature not only overwhelmingly rejected raising licensing fees on shelters last year but the Department of Agriculture AFI program is currently undergoing a legislative post audit.

So, I respectfully ask, why are we here AGAIN discussing raising fees? It makes little sense to increase fees before the audit has been completed and legislators have had a chance to review it.

I am very concerned about the inconsistencies and failures of the AFI program. Why aren't efforts being made to correct the substandard performance of the AFI program? Why aren't efforts being made to charge fees and hold the offending parties responsible for failed inspections, re-inspections and no contacts that cost this Department roughly \$50,000 - \$60,000 dollars instead of raising fees on those that are doing their job correctly? Why not treat all licensees equally? There is a difference in how the Kansas Pet Act is applied to shelters and rescues versus breeders and this is NOT acceptable. We can do better. We need to do better.

Raising fees is not the answer. I ask you to **OPPOSE** HB 2477 and postpone any legislative action until you have studied the Legislative Post Audit report.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kimberly Pugliese

Kimberly Pugliese
Board Member, Beauties and Beasts, Inc.
Wichita, Kansas