



January 30, 2018

House Agriculture Committee – HB 2477

Chair Hoffman and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon, I am Midge Grinstead, the senior state director for the Humane Society of the United States. Prior to this position I served for 15 years as non profit shelter director (past licensee) and a former member of the Governor’s Pet Animal Advisory Board. Today, I appear before you in opposition to HB 2477 which raises licensing fees on shelters and other licensees.

The licensing fee increases in House bill 2477 are a significant burden (increasing 120%-250%) on non profit and municipal shelters. This fee increase targets the wrong group of licensees. Last year, this committee heard testimony about Animal Facility Inspection program “loop holes” that allows failing breeders to escape responsibility for the cost of failed inspections and “no-show” inspections. As a result of these inefficiencies in the AFI program, this committee voted overwhelmingly to require additional inspection fees on failing licensees. The proposed fees would have raised thousands of dollars to cover the services being expended.

Each year Kansas non-profit and municipal shelters handle close to 100,000 companion animals. Kansas, like many other states is dealing with an overpopulation of companion animals. These animals are often stray, unwanted and abused. Frequently they require a lot of health care. As the state director for HSUS, I regularly get calls from shelters and rescues of all sizes who are struggling to meet the financial obligations of animal care. Most of the operations are short on funds and volunteers. In the past six years, shelters and rescues have reached out to me for help with purchases of food, veterinary care, cleaning supplies, collars, leashes and transport. Shelters often ask for donations of \$50-\$100 just to get immediate supplies. The slightest increase in fees on non-profit or municipal shelters can mean the difference of buying much needed supplies or going without. Small rural shelters have an incredibly hard time finding new resources for funding and often have to cut services to keep their shelters going.

Now is not the time to consider fee increases on shelters and other licensees. There is a legislative post audit that will look in-depth at the AFI program. Please wait for the Legislative Post Audit Report which will be out in June. Please reject HB 2477.

Thank you for your time today. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have to the best of my abilities.

Sincerely,

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