



# ATCHISON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## Sheriff Jack Laurie

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**March 22, 2017**

**Chairman Barker  
House Committee on Federal and State  
300 SW 10th Avenue  
Topeka, KS 66612**

Dear Committee,

In May, 2013, the Atchison County Sheriff's Office was faced with a dangerous situation that neither we nor any other law enforcement agency in the State of Kansas were prepared to handle. Numerous privately owned wild and exotic animals were abandoned in our county and we had no choice but to seize the animals. The animals involved in this incident were skunks, bobcats, lynx, servals, cougars, and a tiger. Of the eleven animals the two cougars and the tiger were the three we were very concerned with.

The Atchison County Sheriff's Office became involved when it was reported the owner had somewhat abandoned the animals. After responding to the location we became very concerned not only as the Sheriff but as a citizen of Atchison County. Due to the makeshift cages not being locked and poorly constructed, public safety became our main concern along with the neglect issue. These cages containing the cougars and the tiger were 150 yards off of a highly traveled road, constructed with mismatched chain-link panels held together by hose clamps, no locks securing the animals, no exterior cages to prevent escapes, and only a dog chain used to hold the large tiger in the cage. These cages were not in compliance of the USDA regulations and with that the owner did not have USDA permits up to date. These cages would not have been secure enough to house a large dog let alone a 400lb tiger.

While these animals are already banned in the Dangerous Regulated Animal Act, primates and wolves are not. There would not have been a difference for us. It was hazardous to my staff and community and we did not have the expertise to move these animals. We would not have the appropriate protective gear to remove primates nor does our animal control department. The cost of moving these animals out of our community is enormous. With the animals in 2013, costs were over \$34,000 .

I urge the committee to support House Bill 2276. This bill will ensure that species such as chimpanzees, monkeys, and wolves will only be in the hands of qualified, responsible, and knowledgeable facilities. Many of these animals also can be hazardous due to zoological diseases that can be deadly. These animals are a threat to the safety of the citizens of Kansas and if we do not attempt to strengthen these laws it will be us Kansans who pay the very high price tag that comes with situations like ours.

Sincerely,

*J. Laurie*

Jack Laurie