

Chairman Kerschen and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding House Bill 2477. My name is Mary Kay Caldwell and I am the board president for Southeast Kansas Humane Society. I have been involved with animal welfare for 40 years. I am here today as a strong proponent of HB 2477 as amended by the full House.

Last year, testimonies before this very Committee highlighted issues regarding several inefficiencies in the Animal Facility Inspection Program, including the amount of money expended for no-contact inspections, failed inspections, focused inspections, and re-inspections. Subsequent debate within the legislature overwhelmingly supported inspections and re-inspections without raising fees on shelters and rescues.

HB 2477 does three things:

- It modestly raises fees on shelters
- It addresses those using up resources by charging fees for failed, no contact and re-inspections
- It does not allow for prior notice of inspection to all licensees.

The bill also includes no licensing requirement for shelter and rescue animal foster homes and goes toward where this committee was focused last year in maintaining the program, treating licensees equally and charging fees to those abusing the system.

The Kansas Pet Animal Act was created to govern the health, safety, and welfare of Kansas companion animals. Companion animals live in our homes and sleep in our beds. In most homes, they are considered part of the family. Let's improve the integrity of the Animal Facility Inspection Program by passing HB 2477 as amended by the House.

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

Sincerely,

Mary Kay Caldwell
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