

The Southeast Kansas Humane Society

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In-Person Testimony – proponent SB 551

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Senator Kerschen and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jasmine Kyle. I am the director of the SEK Humane Society, a Pittsburg-based nonprofit organization and a licensee under the Kansas Pet Animal Act (KPAA). Today, I am speaking as part of a coalition of shelters and rescues that strongly supports SB 551, which would establish a stand-alone Pet Animal Facilities Inspection Division at the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

In a 2011 Executive Order, Governor Sam Brownback eliminated the Kansas Animal Health Department (KAHD), an independent state agency for 127 years, and merged it into the Kansas Department of Agriculture. At that time, the Animal Facilities Inspection (AFI) program, responsible for enforcing the Pet Animal Act, was moved to the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Animal Health Division.

Prior to the merger, the Pet Animal Act was effectively enforced, resulting in the closure of 20-45 licensed and unlicensed facilities and seizure of approximately 950 animals annually. Following the merger, the KDA sold equipment needed for seizures and has only facilitated two seizures of animals in need of care in the past decade.

A Legislative Post Audit (LPA) completed in December 2018 indicated that under the KDA, the cycle of inspection failures was allowed to continue without consequences and that animals "were allowed to suffer." Additionally, there was no longer an investigator position to find and close unlicensed animal facilities.

SB 551 will address the deficiencies identified in the LPA and support the work of shelters and rescues. To illustrate our support, shelters and rescues from across Kansas have signed onto the following resolution:

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF SB 551

WHEREAS,

- Senate Bill 551 creates a new Pet Animal Facilities Inspection Division within the Kansas Department of Agriculture, which provides a vital opportunity to protect Kansas pets, support the work of shelters and rescues, and meet the goals of the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Ag Growth Initiative;
- The Animal Facilities Inspection (AFI) Program is currently housed in the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Health, whose primary focus is supporting the livestock industry and securing the safety of the state's food supply;

- The new Pet Animal Facilities Inspection Division will improve oversight of the Kansas Pet Animal Act;
- The 296 Kansas shelters and rescues care for the state’s lost, homeless, and neglected pets;
- A 2018 Legislative Post Audit found that the AFI program lacked adequate policies to ensure consistent inspections and penalties under the Kansas Pet Animal Act;
- The program deficiencies have created an undue financial burden on local governments and local shelters that provide urgent care for animals seized by law enforcement; and
- SB 551 will support the efforts of shelters and rescues that, through adoption, training, and emergency services, protect pets and serve Kansas communities;

NOW THEREFORE,

The undersigned urge the passage of SB 551 to protect Kansas pets and advance the state’s image as a leader in pet animal health.

Kansas Animal Control Association – Kansas
 Ford County Humane Society – Dodge City
 SRL – Minneapolis & Ottawa Co.
 PALS – Parsons and Labette Co.
 Pawnee Co. HS – Larned & Pawnee Co.
 Friends of Animals in Kansas – Topeka
 SCARS – Auburn
 Greater KC HS – KC & Wyandotte
 Finney Co HS – Garden City & Finney Co.
 Reitz Animal Shelter – Manhattan & Riley Co.
 Brown Co. HS – Hiawatha & Brown Co.
 Saving Death Row Dogs – Tecumseh
 CCARE – Clay Center & Clay Co
 McPherson Animal Shelter
 McPherson Humane Society – McPherson & McPherson Co.
 Hutchinson Animal Shelter – Hutchinson and Reno Co.
 Chanute Animal Shelter – Chanute
 Leavenworth Co. Animal Shelter – Lansing & Leav. Co.
 Camp Merry Sunshine – Moline
 Wichita Pug Rescue – Wichita
 Bunny TNT – Wichita
 PALS – Wichita (with the TNR amended out)
 For the Love of Every Animal Rescue – Derby
 Fort Scott Animal Shelter - Fort Scott
 Heart of Jackson HS – Holton & Jackson Co.
 SEK HS – Pittsburg & Crawford Co.
 Pittsburg Animal Shelter – Pittsburg
 Wellington HS – Wellington
 Cowley County HS – Winfield
 Have a Heart TNR – Clifton
 Golden Belt HS – Great Bend & Barton Co.

Corgi Connection – Kansas
 Companion Animal Protection Society - Ks
 Great Plains SPCA – Merriam & Johnson Co.
 Melissa’s Menagerie - Shawnee
 Beauties & Beasts – Wichita & Sg Co.
 Sg Co Animal Control – Wichita & Sg. Co.
 Buck Fund – Emporia & Lyon Co.
 Friends of the Emporia AS – Lyon Co.
 Emporia AS – Emporia & Lyon Co.
 Humane Society of the Flint Hills – Lyon Co.
 Forever Home Rescue – Americus
 AWOL – Independence & Montgomery Co.
 ACARF – LaHarpe & Allen Co.
 HS of the High Plains – Hays & Ellis Co.
 WPAR – Hays & Ellis Co
 Regina’s Rescue – Parker
 Chasing Tails Rescue – Great Bend
 Caring Hands HS – Newton & Harvey Co.
 City of Arma AS
 City of Wier
 City of Longton
 City of Jamestown
 City of Yates Center
 City of Cimarron
 Camp Merry Sunshine - Moline
 Pet World - Lawrence
 PetSmart – J. Tardir
 Kingman Co HS – Kingman & Co.
 Forever Shihtzu & Dog Res. - Chanute
 City of Bonner Springs ACO
 Wichita Animal Action League