

3/17/22

Nika Orebaugh, Proponent – SB 551
Kansas Animal Control Association Treasurer
Animal Control Supervisor

Senator Kerschen and Members of the Committee:

I am sending written testimony today in favor of SB 551, a bill to move the AFI program into a stand-alone Division.

In 2019 I received a complaint regarding animals that were in severe need of care. I called and left messages for the AFI director. No one called back and because the lives of the animals were in jeopardy, my team of animal control officers had to move in to seize the animals. There were 191 in total. In order for our group to do the seizure, we had to reach out to shelters and rescues around the state to help, not only with the holding of the animals but with the seizure itself. It was an enormous task and extremely costly for our county.

This wasn't the only time, I had to do the AFI's job. I've had two other seizures that fell under their responsibilities.

The Ks Animal Health Dept was tasked with governing the Pet Animal Act, until Governor Brownback abolished the Dept and moved the Act under the Dept. of Agriculture. The Legislative Post Audit showed many deficiencies in the AFI program since the move to the KDA and said they allowed animals to suffer.

More than 70% of Kansans have pet animals. Most of those animals are considered to be part of the family, living in homes, sleeping in our beds and sharing our lives. People expect pet animals to be well cared for and trust that our state is doing the best job possible to assure of their welfare.

The AFI program should be elevated to focus on pet animals as it was before. They are NOT livestock and need their own division.

Please let me know if you have any questions....

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