



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

House Civil Justice Committee
Opponent Testimony – House Bill 147
May 31, 2017

Chairman Butler, Vice Chair Hughes, Ranking Member Boggs and members of the committee, my name is Corey Roscoe and I am the Ohio State Director for the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) the nation's largest and most effective animal protection organization. On behalf of the HSUS and our Ohio members and supporters, I offer Opponent testimony on House Bill 147, to change humane society law.

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Before my time with HSUS I had a career working in humane societies and shelters including two here in Ohio. I once felt the day to day challenges of that job - of wanting to help as many people and animals as possible. Now with HSUS, although we are not an animal shelter, we work with law enforcement agencies on the rescue of pets who are victims of manmade or natural disasters. When we are invited to participate in large-scale animal cruelty seizures, we work with and rely on our network of county humane societies to be the next step for those animals. And that is to find them adoptive homes.

I will defer specific concerns about the legal process of this bill to other experts who are testifying; but I can and will speak to the value of county humane societies having the experience of working for and with them.

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One substantial point is the economic value that county humane societies bring to our state. They spend private dollars for a function that benefits the public. They are a free law enforcement service. Many county humane societies devote vast human resources to enforcing the 959 sections of the ORC that ultimately helps ease the workload of municipal police and county sheriffs' offices that are already busy handling crimes against humans.

Best practice is county humane society agents strive for education to lead to compliance of our laws. But in some cases, the animals need to be removed for the safety of the public and the animal and the animal abuser held accountable. It is always tragic when situations of animal neglect or cruelty happen in a community and someone is left to pick up the pieces. Historically, this is the very valuable role that humane societies play – they've picked up the pieces. That significant economic and societal benefit should not be taken for granted.

Animal services are a reflection of the values of the community that they are in and the need for animal services will never go away. Some of the current laws that guide the establishment and procedures of county humane societies have been on the books for over 50 years. We have county humane societies themselves that have been incorporated and have effectively been serving their communities in our state for well over half a century.

The concern is that House Bill 147 adds layers of additional regulatory oversight and applies unverified methods to a system that is working.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee.

Corey Roscoe
Ohio State Director
The Humane Society of the United States