



Proponent Testimony on House Bill 263
House Economic Development, Commerce and Labor Committee
Sharon Harvey, President and CEO, Cleveland Animal Protective League
October 10, 2017

Chair Young, Vice Chair DeVitis, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 263, legislation to permit restaurants and bars to allow dogs on their outdoor patios.

I'm the President & CEO of the Cleveland Animal Protective League (APL), the humane society for Cuyahoga County. We are a private, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization organized under Ohio Revised Code 1717, and as such, are also authorized to appoint humane agents who enforce Ohio's animal protection laws.

Yappy Hours and Pups on Patios have been growing in popularity over the past decade. It wasn't until earlier this year that I and other animal advocates learned that the practice is currently not permitted in Ohio law. HB 263 is needed to affirm the rights of restaurant owners to decide what is right for their business, and to acknowledge the role that pets play in families.

HB 263 would leave the decision of whether to allow dogs on restaurant or bar patios up to the owner of the establishment. Business owners should have the right to make this decision according to their unique fact patterns. As I mentioned earlier, these events are extremely popular and many businesses have already seen the financial value in continuing to host similar events. In fact, they are likely to draw new patrons who may otherwise stay home because they have been away from their dog all day while at work.

More than 6,000 animals were adopted last year through the Cleveland APL, and more than 2,500 animals were fostered. We are reminded every day that pet owners love their animals and truly view them as members of the family – and we want to do everything we can to encourage families to spend time together. This bill celebrates the role that dogs play in the family by including them in fun outings.

I'd like to thank Representative Lanese for her work on this bill, and ask the committee to vote yes on the legislation.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in strong support of this legislation. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.