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Aging and Long Term Care

BRIGID KELLY

State Representative

Chairman Young, Vice Chairman DeVitis, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the House Economic Development, Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 433. This bill, brought to Representative Brinkman and I by a constituent in Hamilton County, is a common sense approach to help the veterinarians in our state earn continuing education credit while helping to responsibly curb the issue of pet overpopulation.

The Ohio Revised Code and the Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board currently require all veterinarians in the state to report thirty hours of continuing education biennially. These hours may be obtained by numerous ways including online courses, office policy development, journal articles or conferences so long as 20 hours are scientifically related to the practice of veterinary medicine and no more than 10 are non-scientific.

Our legislation would simply allow Ohio veterinarians to receive up to two hours of continuing education per renewal if the licensed veterinarian performs free spaying and neutering services. For every one hour of free spaying and neutering services that the licensed veterinarian performs, they shall receive one-half hour of continuing education credit so long as the services are provided at a practice or facility that is appropriately staffed and equipped for such services and is done in conjunction with either a county humane society, dog pound or non-profit.

A companion bill has already been introduced in the Senate due to rising interest amongst the veterinary and animal rights community to provide veterinarian's incentives to volunteer their services. Although many believe veterinarians stand to gain substantial knowledge through their involvement in spay/neuter work, veterinarians would still be required to complete core continuing education requirements by the state

While estimates on number of unwanted animals in the state are unavailable, the exponential reproductive rates of cats and dogs continues to outpace adoption rates. Many shelters in the state are continuously forced to use euthanasia as the only means to make room for new take ins. The Humane Society of the United States successfully lobbied for the passage of a similar bill in the state of New York in 2016 in hopes that these laws might ease this problem.

Representative Brinkman and I believe that House Bill 433 is an easy step to decreasing the unwanted pet population and the number of animals euthanized at Ohio shelters. I appreciate the chance to offer testimony on House Bill 433 and would be happy to answer any questions.

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