



March 13, 2018

Testimony on HB 523

Presented by Nicole Forsyth, President and CEO, RedRover

To whom this may concern,

I am Nicole Forsyth, President and CEO of RedRover. RedRover's mission is to bring animals out of crisis and strengthen the bond between people and animals. As part of our national effort to achieve our mission, RedRover provides grants for survivors of domestic violence seeking to escape their abusive situations with their pets and grants for family violence shelters seeking to create pet housing. Up to 65 percent of domestic violence victims are unable to escape their abusers because they are concerned about what will happen to their pets when they leave (Carlisle-Frank, Frank and Nielsen, 2004). RedRover's grants offer multiple pet-housing options to remove a barrier to safety and allow people and their pets to escape abuse together. We also work with the National Link Coalition, SAF-T program and advocates in the domestic violence assistance sector to up update and manage SafePlaceforPets.org, a website listing nation-wide resources for people seeking to escape abuse with their pets. The site currently lists over 600 resources, with 32 in Ohio. Legislation, such as HB 523, plays a critical role in stopping the cycle of violence these victims currently face.

Animal abuse is a recognized indicator of future violence and is a common crime in domestic violence situations. 71 percent of pet-owning women entering women's shelters reported that their batterer had injured, maimed, killed or threatened family pets for revenge or to psychologically control victims (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence). Establishing animal abuse reporting requirements is a crucial step that can help protect both animals and the human victims of domestic violence, and protect Ohio's families.

On behalf of our 16,000 members (including 542 Ohioans) and over 24,000 supporters and volunteers, RedRover respectfully urges you to support HB 523. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nicole Forsyth
President and CEO, RedRover