



Written Testimony on House Bill 552
House State and Local Government Committee
Sharon Harvey, President and CEO, Cleveland Animal Protective League
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Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 552, legislation to establish requirements governing the chemical capture of animals, prohibit the use of gas chambers when euthanizing an animal, and updating and improving the laws regulating euthanasia-by-injection when performed by certified euthanasia technicians under the limited shelter pharmacy license at animal shelters.

I am the President & CEO of the Cleveland Animal Protective League (APL), which is the humane society for Cuyahoga County and one of the largest animal shelters in Ohio. 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.

The Cleveland APL applauds Representative LaTourette's dedication to ending the antiquated practice of euthanasia by gas chamber, which is rarely practiced today by Ohio's shelters. The bill also ends the mandate that animal shelters operated by dog wardens sell unclaimed dogs to nonprofit teaching and research facilities for \$3 upon request.

Thanks in large part to the support of our community; the Cleveland APL is fortunate to have three veterinarians, a number of veterinarian technicians and certified euthanasia technicians on staff. We also have an extremely low euthanasia rate and never euthanize healthy, friendly, humanely and safely treatable animals for time limits or to make space. Unfortunately though, there are times that euthanasia of companion animals is absolutely necessary whether to end their suffering or to protect public safety. When this is the case, our team of professionals ensures a humane and compassionate end of life for that animal by first sedating the animal and then performing humane euthanasia-by-injection. This process is exactly the same as that performed in private veterinary practices. Not only is it best practice for the welfare of the animals involved, but also for the safety of our euthanasia technicians. But under current law, shelters that do not have a veterinarian only have access to one euthanasia drug, which is no longer considered the optimal choice, and have no ability to obtain and use drugs to sedate animals prior to euthanasia.

As mentioned earlier, most animal shelters in Ohio stopped using gas chambers many years ago. We believe Ohio should demonstrate its support for the humane treatment of animals at all stages of their lives by officially banning the use of remaining gas chambers now. We also believe it is time to amend the law regulating the limited shelter pharmacy license so that the Ohio Pharmacy Board and Ohio Veterinary Licensing Board can stay up to date with best practices and permit animal shelters to use the proper tools for performing humane and safe euthanasia when euthanasia becomes necessary.

While we support the bill's intent, we do have some outstanding concerns with administrative processes relating to the approval of euthanasia and pre-euthanasia sedation drugs in the bill. Line 508 states that only drugs that have been approved by rule of the state board of pharmacy, in consultation with the state veterinary medical licensing board and the Ohio county dog wardens association, may be used.

We believe that veterinarians are best suited to make the determination or provide counsel on which drugs should be used during sedation. However, if the dog wardens association is going to be consulted, we ask that the association for Ohio's humane societies organized under Section 1717 should also be included in the bill.

We also believe that references to "animal shelters" in Chapter 4729 of the bill should be streamlined. The bill defines "animal shelters" in line 411, as "a facility operated by a humane society or any society organized under Section 1717 of the Revised Code or a dog pound operated pursuant to Chapter 955 of the Revised Code." We believe this definition already includes "county dog wardens", which is currently listed separately from "animal shelters" throughout the bill. The separate listing of "county dog wardens" from "animal shelters" causes confusion and is duplicative, and we would request that separate references be stricken from the bill.

We appreciate Representative LaTourette's willingness to work with us on both of these issues and are confident that we will find resolution on them prior to the bill's passage. Again, thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this legislation. I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this important issue.