



TESTIMONY ON OHIO H.B. 33

Presented by Dr. Alba Gonzalez, DVM
Before the Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee
Thursday, June 27, 2019

Chairman Lang, Vice-Chair Plummer, Ranking Minority Member Leland, and distinguished members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, I am Alba Gonzalez, a licensed veterinarian in the state of Ohio and practice at Rascal Animal Hospital in Central Ohio. I also have a Master's degree in Veterinary Forensics. Based on my experiences in my practice and forensics education, I respectfully ask this committee to support H.B. 33.

In my capacity, I see or learn of animal cruelty, neglect and abandonment on a frequent basis. At Rascal Animal Hospital we have assisted with cases of abuse and neglect ranging from hoarding and neglect to physical abuse. Some of these cases have been investigated and prosecuted. Numerous other proponents of this bill will cite the link between animal cruelty and human violence. The National Association of Prosecuting Attorneys has recognized that link, and urges prosecutors to give animal cruelty cases as much priority as other crimes of violence (see <http://www.apainc.org/programs/animal-cruelty>). The link between animal neglect, and the neglect of children, the disabled, and the elderly is indisputable.

The majority of the states in this nation have laws related to the reporting of animal cruelty by veterinarians, and more bills introduced to mandate reporting. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), have both issued policy statements that address reporting of animal abuse by veterinarians. The 2015 AAHA position statement "supports the reporting of suspicions of animal abuse and providing immunity from legal liability when filing such reports in good faith".

A veterinarian's role is critical in both detecting and preventing animal abuse. This legislation would ensure that animal abuse is reported to the appropriate authorities, while providing civil immunity for reports made in good faith.

I thank the committee for its time in hearing my testimony, and urge passage of this H 33 which I consider to be a critical bill in addressing animal abuse in the state of Ohio.

Alba Gonzalez, DVM, MS