



From: Dr. Melanie Butera

October 1, 2014

Attention: State Representative Brenner
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Dear State Representative Brenner:

I am writing to you today as a veterinarian and domestic deer owner in support of "Trooper's Law," the proposal that will allow Ohio veterinarians and wildlife rehabilitators to once again provide medical care for injured or orphaned wild deer in Ohio.

For two centuries, Ohio had no such restriction to providing aide to injured white-tailed deer, one of Ohio's most-prized native species.

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Throughout all that time, there were very few negative repercussions to allowing veterinarians and wildlife professionals do their jobs caring for cervids.

Representative Brenner, we are not asking for Ohio to allow deer or other wild animals be kept as pets. We are not asking for any restrictions in the current white tail deer farming or hunting industries. We are not asking the state to spend any additional money . We are simply asking you to do the right thing and let veterinarians and wildfire rehabilitators fulfill our obligation to Nature to assist injured or orphaned white tail deer, a species that provides this state with nearly one billion dollars in industry each year. For all that economic impact, we owe this species at least the same rights we afford squirrels and rabbits, the right to be treated medically and returned to the wild by trained professionals.

What brought about this new law in the first place? No scientific reason for the prohibition of medical assistance and rehabilitation to deer exists. Cervids are not rabies vectors. They have not been associated with any huge public health concerns in our state. The Chronic Wasting Disease syndrome reported in other states has not been reported in Ohio despite

vigorous ongoing surveillance by the ODNR and ODA. Propagation of CWD would not be effected by the rehabilitation of a small handful of injured or orphaned deer.

The usual explanation of “budget limitations” does also not explain the origins of the current law. Allowing veterinarians and wildlife rehabbers to do their jobs does not require one single taxpayer cent. We do these things out of love for Creation and duty to our professions, not for money. We volunteer our time and services, and donate the materials needed to help these animals. We ask other like-minded people that see the majesty in our state’s only indigenous cervid species to help support our work.

If science and budget, therefore, are not behind the current law, what is? Last year, I learned the explanation. I attended the cervid certification class at the ODA in 2011 and asked the state veterinarian to explain the rationale behind the current law. He informed me that the deer farmers in the state felt there was too much ambiguity in the previous situation where some wild deer could be helped and others could not. He told me

that it was at the request of the deer farmers that all assistance to the wild cervid population be prohibited because some of them had complained that greater restrictions were being put on them but not on the rehabilitation facilities. Therefore, Ohio's current law prohibiting wild deer rehabilitation is not based on science at all but on human resentment. This base human emotion is no just reason to make animals suffer.

Since the change in the law, veterinarians like myself are being asked to violate our professional oath promising the "prevention and relief of animal suffering." This oath does not apply to just poodles and dairy cattle. We swear to dedicate our lives to *all* animals, even the lowly white tail deer, that despite its huge positive contribution to Ohio's economy cannot even receive lifesaving treatment when presented to a veterinarian.

Is there any thing more beautiful and precious than a fawn? Is there any creature more deserving of our compassion and medical expertise than a newborn struggling to survive in a harsh world.? Yet, Ohio's current law prevents veterinarians and wildlife professionals from fulfilling their obligation to help these creatures of God. Let us serve Creation, Mr.

Brenner. Let us do our work. Our state, our society, our species will be the better for it.

Sincerely yours,

Melanie Butera, DVM