

October 9, 2017

The Ohio House State & Local Government Committee
c/o Graham Lescalette

Re: Proponent testimony to HB 319

Dear Chairman Anielski and Honorable Members of the House State & Local Government Committee,

I submit this written testimony regarding House Bill 319 (“HB 319”), a bill that would designate the shelter pet as the official pet of Ohio. I am an attorney that serves as a prosecutor for animal cruelty cases, as well as practicing animal law generally. I also act as a board member for several animal welfare and rescue organizations.

I strongly agree with this bill’s sponsor, Representative Lanese, that shelter pets deserve special recognition. Every day Ohio humane societies, county animal shelters, municipal animal shelters, and rescues care for shelter pets—stray, neglected, abused, sick, and otherwise unwanted animals. The people who work for or volunteer with these organizations are tireless. Every day they work toward the ultimate goal of placing these pets into permanent homes, but the stream of pets coming through their doors is truly never ending. Tragically, despite the best efforts of our shelter workers and volunteers, Ohio is still euthanizing friendly, adoptable shelter pets because there are simply too many and not enough homes open to taking them in.

As unbelievable as it seems, this problem partially exists because many people are still unaware of the option to adopt a shelter pet in need and that those pets have the same capacity to be great companions as pets from any other source. Shelter pets and the people who dedicate their work and free time to help them need our support. There is a saying in animal welfare that when you adopt a shelter pet, you save two lives: the life of the shelter pet you adopted, and the one that takes its place. Making the shelter pet Ohio’s official state pet is a great way to send a message that when people adopt shelter pets, everyone wins.

I encourage this Committee to support HB 319. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Yours truly,
DanaMarie K. Pannella
Attorney at Law