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**Committees:**  
Judiciary (Ranking Member)  
Local Government, Public Safety,  
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Education  
Rules & Reference  
Ways and Means  
Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Members of the Ohio Senate Agriculture Committee  
**From:** Senator Cecil Thomas  
**Subject:** Sponsor Testimony – Senate Bill 232  
**Date:** January 30, 2018

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Good afternoon Chair Hackett, Vice Chair Hoagland, Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the Ohio Senate Agriculture Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 232 which seeks to "allow a licensed veterinarian to receive up to two continuing education credits per biennium for performing free spaying and neutering services."

This legislation would give a licensed veterinarian one-half hour of continuing education credit for every one hour of free spaying and neutering services they provide at a practice, facility, or property that is appropriately equipped and staffed to provide such services. That licensed veterinarian must also provide follow-up services for any post-operative complications related to the surgery that occur within 24 hours, free of charge. The Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board would adopt policies and procedures necessary for the administration of this section.

The idea for this bill came from Beth, a Cincinnati resident and tireless advocate for animals. After seeing that the state of New York passed a bipartisan version of this law in 2016, Beth worked closely with an acquaintance of hers named DanaMarie to figure out Ohio's needs. It is then that Beth contacted my office and arranged a meeting to discuss the merits of this proposed piece of legislation, leading to my submission to LSC for a draft. I then reached out to the Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board as well as to the Ohio Veterinary Medical Association and Corey, the state director of the Humane Society, in order to acquire as much input as possible from all the interested parties.

According to The Humane Society of the United States, euthanasia numbers in animal shelters have declined sharply since the 1970s, from 15 million cats and dogs to approximately 3.4 million in 2013. This success is largely attributed to widespread spay and neuter efforts to reduce the amount of unwanted animals on the streets as well as increased pet ownership.

Statistics on euthanasia have been known to be tricky as there is no set national government institution or animal organization responsible for gathering concrete data and streamlining it across the states. The Cincinnati Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals alone reported that 551 cats and dogs were euthanized in 2017 in their shelters. With 88 counties in Ohio, the estimates of total euthanasias rise to the tens of thousands. With this being the case, I strongly believe any step in increasing access to spay and neuter services will bring us closer to the day when euthanasia will be reserved only for animals who are suffering or too aggressive to safely reside in our communities.

With that being said, I thank you again for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 232. At this time, I would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.