



**Written Testimony on Senate Bill 232
Senate Agriculture Committee**

Sharon Harvey, President and CEO, Cleveland Animal Protective League
February 6, 2018

Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Hoagland, Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the Senate Agriculture Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on SB 232, which would allow a licensed veterinarian to elect to receive up to two continuing education credits every two years for performing free spaying and neutering services.

I am the President & CEO of the Cleveland Animal Protective League, 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. Each year, we assist approximately 14,000 animals, with about half of those being admitted to our shelter for rehoming.

As part of licensure, veterinarians must complete a specified number of continuing education requirements. Under this new law, they would be able to elect to perform free spay-neuter surgery as a "community service" to earn this education credit.

The Cleveland Animal Protective League sees a number of benefits to this legislation. SB 232 would encourage veterinarians to provide this community service as continuing education, strengthen partnerships with animal welfare organizations and animal care and control agencies, improve community animal health for owners who cannot afford customary spay/neuter fees, reduce animal shelter overcrowding that still leads to euthanasia in some communities, and ease the economic burden in municipalities whose shelters would benefit from free spay/neuter of adoptable animals or other targeted animal populations.

The bill also includes consumer protections, in that it requires that a veterinarian provide free follow-up services for any post-operative complications that arise within 24 hours of performing the surgery.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this meaningful issue.