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Written Testimony on Senate Bill 232  
Senate Agriculture Committee  
Officer Paula Evans  
Humane Agent for Licking County Humane Society  
Tuesday, April 17, 2018

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

I am the Humane Agent for the Licking County Humane Society. LCHS is a private, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization organized under Ohio Revised Code 1717, and as such, is authorized to appoint humane agents who enforce Ohio's animal protection laws. I was appointed in Licking County in May of 2010 and my primary responsibility is to enforce ORC 959.13.

Each day, I see the effects of the pet overpopulation problem in our county. Litters of unplanned and unwanted kittens are routine, resulting in neglect, injury, starvation and suffering for these animals. Shelters cannot house and serve all of these cats/kittens. The over-population of cats is one of our biggest obstacles in animal welfare. There simply are not enough resources to care for them. It is not uncommon for LCHS to have several hundred people on the waiting list during kitten season who are trying to find homes for cats/kittens.

The humane answer continues to be spay/neuter. Licking County Humane Society currently provides 10 spay/neuter clinics per month to our community. In 2017, we altered 1369 LCHS pets and 1434 community-owned pets. We also altered 272 unowned cats through our Trap/Neuter/Return Program. These surgeries were primarily paid for through donations, grants, Good Samaritans and owners. Yet, our cat population is still out of control. A female cat can produce an average of 3 litters in one year, and the average number of kittens in a feline litter is 5. So in just 2 years, 1 female cat and her offspring could produce 225 cats.

We are fortunate in Licking County to have low-cost spay/neuter resources available. Many smaller communities have no access to low-cost spay and neuter. The pet population is unchecked unless an owner can afford to use a private veterinarian for spay/neuter. Pricing at a vet's office ranges from \$150-\$500 for spay/neuter.



Allowing vets to earn CEU's for providing free spay/neuter is a win-win, especially in rural communities. Resources are limited and the cat pet population is often unchecked. Even a few free spay/neuters will benefit those rescues struggling to keep their organization afloat, preventing hundreds of unwanted litters in their communities and thousands of dollars in future costs to care for these cats.

In conclusion, I want to thank the veterinary community for all that they are doing for animals and animal welfare in Ohio. Thank you also for the opportunity to respond to this important issue.