

**Ohio Senate Agriculture Committee**  
**SB 232, Veterinarians Continuing Ed for Neutering Services**

**Proponent Testimony by Beth Sheehan**

**April 17, 2018**

Good afternoon Chair Hackett, Vice Chair Hoagland, and Ranking Minority Member O'Brien, and distinguished members of the Senate Agriculture Committee,

I am Beth Sheehan, a resident of Hamilton County, who stands before you, representing a **broad, grassroots coalition of dog and cat advocates**, who enthusiastically support SB 232: AARF Radio Ohio; Angels for Animals; Animal Pawtectors; Ashtabula County Animal Protective League; The Black Dog Food Pantry; Dogs Unlimited; Fairfield County CARES (Citizens for Animal Rights and Ethical Standards); Falcon Animal Rescue; Family Puppy Boycott-Puppy Mill Awareness of NW Ohio; Harrison County Dog Pound Volunteers; Hartman's Hounds; Friends of Fido MCDP; Heaven Can Wait; Humane Society of Richland County; Joseph's Legacy; Justice for Herbie; Kecia Mathys; Max's Animal Mission; National Animal Shelter Volunteers; Never Muzzled; Nitro's Ohio Army; North Coast Boxer Rescue; Ohio American Eskimo Rescue; Ohio Coalition of Dog Advocates; One of a Kind Pet Rescue; Our Mission Dog Rescue; Paws and the Law; Pawz 2 Adopt, Austintown; Peppermint Pig Animal Rescue; A Perfect Match; Pinealope Animal Rescue; Rescue Village; Rose's Rescue; Ross County Humane Society; Safe Harbor Animal Rescue, Vermillion; Sanctuary for Senior Dogs; Save Ohio Strays; Soul Connections of Central Ohio; Summit County Shelter; TNR of Warren, Inc.; Tuscarawas County Humane Society; Underdog Society of Knox County; Vote 4 Animals Help Chained Dogs, Dayton; West Side Cats, and 911 Dog Rescue Inc. / Amy's Adoptables

I will address more fully Senator Beagle's question in the last hearing of this bill. "Why should veterinarians receive CEU's when they already know how to perform spay-neuter surgeries?"

SB 232, Veterinarian Continuing Ed for Neutering Services, is a home run for Ohio!

- gives veterinarians the **OPTION** (not mandate) of performing up to **FOUR HOURS of FREE SPAY-NEUTER SURGERIES** to receive up to two continuing ed units needed for license renewal
- **14 Ohio, distinguished, licensing boards** currently allow continuing ed credit for pro bono work of their licensees:
  - The Supreme Court of Ohio that licenses attorneys
  - The State Medical Board of Ohio
  - The State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy
  - The Ohio State Dental Board
  - The Ohio Board of Nursing
  - The Ohio Vision Professionals Board
  - The State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy
  - The Ohio Board of Psychology
  - The Ohio State Chiropractic Board
  - The Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Athletic Trainers Board
  - The Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board
  - The Ohio Chemical Dependency Professionals Board
  - Ohio Emergency Medical Services
  - The Speech and Hearing Professionals Board
- no cost
- is voluntary
- no burdensome regulations
- saves animal lives
- saves taxpayer money, especially in rural counties with limited funds
- shelter medicine is unique and only briefly covered in veterinary school; thus, additional learning opportunity for veterinarians
- vets may learn about ethnic, indigent, and underserved populations, not normally encountered in their work-a-day world

- provides critical service to neighborhoods with outside, community cats or with low-income families
- does not take revenue from other veterinary practices
- **Ohio veterinarians advocate for SB 232.**

1. **Dawn Truesdale, DVM**, co-owner of Linworth Animal Hospital in Worthington, Ohio

“Spaying and neutering animals remains the single most important way to maintain population control and minimize euthanasia.”

“... at Linworth Animal Hospital, we recognize what an enormous educational opportunity it could be for veterinarians ... to have clinical experience with experienced HQHVSN (high quality high volume spay/neuter) surgeons ... provides education in techniques that allow for faster surgery times while maintaining proper tissue handling. Indeed, **witnessing first hand the high standard of care in HQHVSN clinics would provide a quality educational experience that could not be provided by the standard webinar or other non-clinical methods of educational opportunities** ... These are excellent skills for all veterinarians to learn, and their donated time helped them with technique and confidence that benefited all their subsequent surgical patients.”

“I believe providing the option for clinical, pro-bono CEs will not only enhance the skills of veterinarians ... it will provide more subsidized care to and spread awareness of those in need.”

2. **Melanie DeHaan, DVM**, founder and Medical Director for Shelter Outreach Services of Ohio, a non-profit HQHVSN hospital

(Volunteering in HQHVSN) “also provides those veterinarians with an opportunity to learn about programs (such as TNR) that they are not exposed to in private practice.”

“HQHVSN is a specialized form of veterinary medicine. **High volume spay and neuter surgeons are skilled in certain techniques that allow for faster surgery times, and better tissue handling skills.** These are good

skills for all veterinarians to learn, and ... beneficial to them and their future patients.”

“I have trained many vet students and private practice veterinarians in high volume spay and neuter techniques. **Every one of the veterinarians that I have trained learned skills that they took with them, and that helped them with technique and confidence that benefited all their subsequent surgical patients.**”

3. **Lee Schrader, DVM**, Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (Small Animal) and Executive Director, the Fayette Regional Humane Society

“The bill will also allow veterinarians not just to become more skilled in spay and neuter surgeries, but it will also expose them to the realities of shelter medicine ... Many new veterinary school graduates are not highly experienced in spay/neuter surgery, as veterinary colleges see very few unsterilized animals. I believe that the experience of performing these surgeries will add greatly to veterinarian’s skills as well as their understanding of shelter medicine.’

“Working pro bono for shelters can be a wonderful experience, and I believe that **the knowledge and understanding that these veterinarians will gain goes far beyond the 2 continuing education units that they will receive.**”

4. **Barbara Hodges, DVM**, The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association

“Veterinarians can gain substantial knowledge, ... including learning new peri-operative procedures, other effective anesthesia protocols and more efficient surgical techniques. For example, pediatric or early-age sterilization techniques are not universally taught in veterinary schools, however they are routinely performed at spay/neuter clinics.”

“Additionally, there are a wide range of educational resources that veterinarians are exposed to ... For example, in 2016, the Association of Shelter Veterinarians published newly updated veterinary medical care guidelines for spay/neuter programs, including those performing high-

quality high-volume spay/neuter (HQHVSN) and these guidelines are now commonly referenced at spay/neuter programs nationwide.”

“Finally, new scientific perspectives on sterilization are still emerging and that information is typically shared among veterinary professionals participating in spay/neuter programs. For example, the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association published a piece addressing the issue of fetal suffering during the sterilization of pregnant animals.”

“In addition, (the pro bono surgeries are) an obvious benefit for animals and the entire community. In these tough economic times, (this helps) alleviate pet overpopulation and reduce the number of unwanted animals.”

Chair Hackett, Vice Chair Hoagland, and Ranking Minority Member O'Brien, SB 232 is a remarkable bill that saves lives and saves money.

Healthy, treatable dogs and cats are routinely killed, simply for space, in shelters. Each animal that is spayed or neutered means brighter, financial days ahead for county and shelter coffers.

With the passage of SB 232, we recognize the compassionate, altruistic work of our veterinarians; we hasten fiscal efficiency of our county governments; we attain a higher standard of humanity for ourselves.

I appreciate the openness of the leadership and members of the Senate Agriculture Committee to learn more about this significant bill. I am pleased to answer your questions.