



Written Testimony on House Bill 552
Senate Agriculture Committee

Sharon Harvey, President and CEO, Cleveland Animal Protective League
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Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Hoagland, Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the Senate Agriculture Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 552, legislation to establish requirements governing the chemical capture of animals, prohibit the use of gas chambers when euthanizing an animal, and updating and improving the laws regulating euthanasia-by-injection when performed by certified euthanasia technicians under the limited shelter pharmacy license at animal shelters.

I am the President & CEO of the Cleveland Animal Protective League (APL), 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.

The Cleveland APL applauds Representative LaTourette's dedication to ending the antiquated practice of euthanasia by gas chamber, which is rarely practiced today by Ohio's shelters.

Thanks in large part to the support of our community; the Cleveland APL is fortunate to have three veterinarians, a number of veterinarian technicians and certified euthanasia technicians on staff. We also have an extremely low euthanasia rate and never euthanize healthy, friendly, humanely and safely and humanely treatable animals for time limits or to make space. Unfortunately though, there are times that euthanasia of companion animals is absolutely necessary whether to end their suffering or to protect public safety. When this is the case, our team of professionals ensures a humane and compassionate end of life for that animal by first sedating the animal and then performing humane euthanasia-by-injection. This process is exactly the same as that performed in private veterinary practices. Not only is it best practice for the welfare of the animals involved, but also for the safety of our euthanasia technicians. But under current law, shelters that do not have a veterinarian only have access to one euthanasia drug, which is no longer considered the optimal choice, and have no ability to obtain and use drugs to sedate animals prior to euthanasia. This limitation, especially when handling dangerous or potentially dangerous animals, causes unnecessary stress for the animals and risk for the people.

As mentioned earlier, most animal shelters in Ohio stopped using gas chambers many years ago. We believe Ohio should demonstrate its support for the humane treatment of animals at all stages of their lives by officially banning the use of any remaining gas chambers now. We also believe it is time to amend the law regulating the limited shelter pharmacy license so that the Ohio Pharmacy Board and Ohio Veterinary Licensing Board can stay up to date with best practices and permit animal shelters to use the proper tools for performing humane and safe euthanasia when euthanasia becomes necessary.

I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this important issue and ask for swift passage.