



Representative Tom Brinkman
Ohio's 27th House District

Chairman Koehler, Vice Chair Smith, Ranking Member Brent, and members of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 146, which would prohibit a convicted animal abuser from owning a companion animal for a period of time.

Whether it is a child's first friend or a service dog who helps take care of an elderly veteran, companion animals provide a unique comfort to all of us at some point in our lives. And while the vast majority treat God's creations with the respect they deserve, abusers exist in every community. In August of last year, a Butler County man was arrested for hanging and beating his girlfriend's cat after a bad breakup. Unfortunately, such incidents are all too common and are often the first sign of abusive behavior that will not stop with animals. Currently, abusers in Ohio are able to continue their behavior towards animals with very few obstacles between them and their next victims.

This bill helps to put a stop to this abuse by creating a first strike law that would prohibit a person convicted of misdemeanor animal abuse from owning a companion animal for 5 years post-conviction, or 15 years if this is a second misdemeanor offense. If the person is convicted of felony animal abuse, the penalties are 15 years for a first offense or a lifetime for a second offense.

Thank you once again for giving me the opportunity to testify and I'd be happy to answer any questions.