



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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Proponent - Senate Bill 167 (Yuko)  
Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee  
Corey Roscoe

February 5, 2020

Chair Hoagland, Vice Chair Schaffer, Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Corey Roscoe the Ohio state director for the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the nation's most effective animal protection organization. On behalf of the HSUS and our Ohio members and supporters, I am here today to support Senate Bill 167 to prohibit the use of gas chambers as a form of euthanasia.

We are thankful to Senator Yuko for his leadership on this bill. In the 132nd General Assembly a similar proposal under Rep. LaTourette passed the House with bipartisan support and a diversity of stakeholders and was pending in the Senate Ag Committee during the lame-duck session. We are working with Senator Yuko's office on technical amendments that mirrors the previous version to ensure the scope of this ban is limited to domestic animals in animal shelters as defined under 4729.01 (humane society, county or city dog shelter.)

Euthanasia can be defined as the active acceleration of a "good" death. One of the most critical responsibilities of those in the animal sheltering and animal control fields is to provide the most humane death possible for dogs and cats when that outcome is necessary. It's a difficult task for shelter personnel who alleviate the extreme behavioral and physical suffering for those animals for whom there is no long-term treatment. A task tempered only by the fact that humane euthanasia is possible when the most effective methods are utilized. Gas chambers are an outdated form of euthanasia:

- Gas Chambers are small, dark, hot boxes that are filled with carbon monoxide (CO) or carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). Once shelter pets are placed inside these boxes, it takes minutes before an animal loses consciousness, during which time they may experience fear, anxiety and stress. They may struggle for air or begin convulsing before finally losing consciousness. For young, old, ill, injured, or highly stressed animals, death can take even longer.
- Gas chambers pose physical and psychological harm to staff, as they must force fractious animals into the small chambers and expose themselves to fatal gas. It is a hazardous substance that is highly toxic and has no odor, no color, and no taste. Repeated exposure to carbon monoxide, even at low levels, can result in long-term effects, including impaired memory, breathing difficulties, muscle weakness, heart irregularity, and brain damage. When animal shelter employees use gas chambers to euthanize animals, they report increased emotional stress and higher rates of professional burn out.



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A humane alternative to using gas chambers exists. Euthanasia by injection of approved drugs (EBI) is the most effective and humane form of euthanasia. When animals are injected with proper euthanasia drugs, they can lose consciousness in as little as 3-5 seconds and lose ability to feel stress or pain almost immediately, making the process completely painless, safe, and humane. A 2009 study<sup>1</sup> confirmed that EBI (euthanasia by injection) is as cost effective, if not less expensive, than use of a properly maintained gas chamber, which need to be routinely calibrated to ensure that proper amounts of gas are released.

In 2020 in Ohio, no shelter pet needs to be placed in a small box and gassed to death. When a shelter animal must be euthanized, they deserve a truly humane euthanasia. Last year, we celebrated a “shelter pet” becoming our official state pet. To truly honor shelter pets we must treat them humanely at all times especially at the end of their lives.

Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Fakkema, Doug, 2009, Comparison of Sodium Pentobarbital and Carbon Monoxide as Euthanasia Agents, American Humane Association