



TESTIMONY ON OHIO H.B. 67

Presented by Vicki Deisner, Ohio Animal Advocates

Before the Ohio Senate Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

Chairman Hoagland, Vice-Chair Schaffer, Ranking Minority Member O'Brien, and distinguished members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, I am Vicki Deisner, Executive Director of Ohio Animal Advocates (OAA), and on behalf of our Board and members, we ask this committee to support and pass H.B. 67.

OAA advocates for animals by effecting systemic change and working toward the humane treatment of all animals. OAA Board members, committee members, and founders work on animal welfare issues on the ground in local communities throughout Ohio as well as statewide policy at the statehouse, with the goal of making a difference for Ohio's animals and the communities in which they live. Advancing the humane treatment of companion animals includes supporting innovative solutions to increase spay-neuter opportunities throughout Ohio.

H.B. 67 is an innovative solution to advancing spay-neuter opportunities in Ohio by creating the Veterinarian Student Debt Assistance Program. The Program allows the State Veterinary Medical Licensing Board to repay all or part of an educational loan in return for performing charitable veterinarian services including free spay-neuter services which will help to accomplish the community goal of reducing the population of homeless animals.

Across the nation, the majority of municipal animal shelters are underfunded, as are non-profit rescue groups. Many operate on shoestring budgets and are either

P.O. Box 6031, Columbus OH 43206; info@ohioanimaladvocates.org

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all-volunteer organizations or rely heavily on volunteers to serve animals in need. While they can afford to provide shelter, food, and minor medical treatment, they generally lack funding for spay/neuter procedures.

Spay/neuter programs are incredibly cost-effective when compared to sheltering animals. A national survey found that shelters spend an average of \$176 for each impounded animal, with a cost of \$450 to ultimately place an animal into a new home. Providing this innovative solution of free veterinary spay-neuter services is critical to providing shelters and rescue groups with the resources they need to spay/neuter before adoption, saving both lives and money.

In summary, OAA strongly urges the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee to support and pass H.B. 67. We thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

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