

Columbus Office
Vern Riffe Center
77 S. High Street
10th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6111
(614) 644-6030
Rep21@ohiohouse.gov
www.ohiohouse.gov



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Beth Liston, MD PhD State Representative, 21st District

Chairman Brinkman, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony for House Bill 493 to create the “Ohio House Rabbit Rescue” license plate.

This legislation came about when members the Ohio House Rabbit Rescue reached out to establish a license plate that would help increase the visibility of rabbits as companion animal pets across the state. The Ohio House Rabbit Rescue operates the largest Rescue and Adoption Center dedicated exclusively to rabbits in the state. At any one time, OHRR cares for 35-40 adoptable bunnies at their Center in Worthington, OH.

Rabbits come to the House Rabbit Rescue through a combination of capturing ‘stray’ pet rabbits who have been released outdoors, where they cannot survive, and owner surrenders. ‘Strays’ and surrendered rabbits are accepted from across Ohio.

The Ohio House Rabbit Rescue annually hosts the MidWest BunFest which draws over 1,000 visitors from across the Midwest and nationally. The BunFest is an important opportunity for OHRR to raise funds and awareness. During the 2019 and 2021 Midwest BunFest, OHRR was able to promote new Rabbit Friendly License Plates to each one of their Ohio attendees.

The establishment of this license plate would help increase donations to OHRR so the organization is not as reliant on the BunFest as their main source of fundraising.

Thank you again for your time, and I would be happy to take any questions.