



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

---

1255 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, NW  
Suite 450  
Washington, DC 20037

---

P 202-452-1100  
F 202-778-6132

---

[humanesociety.org](http://humanesociety.org)

May 24, 2021

**RE: Proponent Testimony, Senate Bill 164**

Chairman Schaffer, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Fedor 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. The HSUS has a long history of service in the state. We advocate for better laws to protect animals and communities, provide direct care to animals during emergency rescue and provide training to animal care professionals and law enforcement officials.

On behalf of my organization and our supporters in Ohio we submit this testimony today in strong support of Senate Bill 164, which would prohibit the use of gas chambers as a form of euthanasia in animal shelters and upgrade specific sections of our state's animal cruelty code.

A gas chamber is a manufactured device (see photo) for killing animals consisting of a sealed chamber into which a poisonous gas is introduced such as carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide. Under the provisions in this bill, a narrow path was carved out to prohibit gas chamber euthanasia of domestic animals within a shelter setting while not affecting animals in laboratories, in agriculture or for wildlife.

In a gas chamber, domestic pets may spend up to 25 terrifying minutes before they expire. During this prolonged, panicked time, the animals may frequently claw and cry, looking for a way out, experience convulsions or suffer major organ damage before losing consciousness. If you're sensitive to animal suffering, its operation cannot help but disturb you.

When gas chambers are used in a shelter setting, they can not only cause animal suffering but add risk to people who can potentially be exposed to carbon monoxide, a leading cause of accidental poisoning in the United States. Gas chambers like other devices must be maintained and calibrated. Beyond that, there is always room for operator error or misuse.

A more humane method of euthanasia exists for domestic animals referred to as EBI or euthanasia by injection of approved drugs such as pentobarbital. EBI is both pain free and stress free as animals euthanized by this method can lose consciousness in as little as 3-5 seconds. The American Veterinary Medical Association has expressly stated that "euthanasia by intravenous injection of an approved euthanasia agent remains the preferred method for euthanasia of dogs, cats and other small companion animals."



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

Despite gas chambers being a lethal apparatus, to my knowledge there is no state training required for an operator of a gas chamber. In contrast, those shelter workers who perform euthanasia by injection of a shelter pet are required to complete a minimum of 16 hours of training approved by the Ohio veterinary medical licensing board to become a certified euthanasia technician.

We are fortunate in Ohio that nearly all animal shelters in our state choose to use the safer and more humane method of euthanasia by injection of approved drugs. Despite a near future when no animal shelters in our state will be using gas chambers to kill pets, it is critical that they be prohibited as a permissible form of euthanasia to guarantee they will not be used by any shelters going forward.

We respectfully ask the committee to consider what we feel is a crucial language change that needs to be made in the bill:

- Sec. 959.06 uses the word “recklessly”. For example, “No person shall **recklessly** destroy any domestic animal by use of carbon dioxide...” The word recklessly is not needed and should be removed since the bill seeks to prohibit the device itself and that is not dependent on how the device is used. We suggest deleting the word recklessly.

The HSUS also supports the provisions under the bill that separates out intentional, egregious acts of animal cruelty as “offenses of violence.” Numerous examples of intentional animal cruelty exist that should rightfully be considered violent acts. One such example is an incident that happened in October of 2020. A 22-year-old Columbus man went to a park to intentionally set a crate on fire that had a 17-week-old puppy locked inside of the crate to kill the puppy. The suspect confessed when questioned by law enforcement and has been indicted for cruelty to animals and arson. We believe it is in the best interest of law enforcement to be able to classify these types of actions as a violent crime.

Classifying specific intentional animal cruelty acts as “offenses of violence” can help show a history or pattern of violence and ring alarm bells for agencies involved with future criminal suspects. In addition, it is our understanding that the designation of an “offense of violence” will allow a judge to impose more appropriate penalties than what is afforded under current felony animal cruelty laws.

For all of our stated reasons, we urge the committee to vote in favor of Senate Bill 164.





**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

## Puppy recovering after being set on fire while in her crate at Ohio park

**WLWT5**

Updated: 6:08 AM EDT Oct 15, 2020

**WLWT Digital Staff**



SOURCE: Columbus Police