

SB 164, Animal Cruelty & the Gas Chamber
Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
May 25, 2021

Proponent Testimony by Beth Sheehan

Chair Schaffer, Vice Chair Huffman, and Ranking Minority Member Fedor,

I am Beth Sheehan, a Hamilton County resident, representing the Ohio, grass roots group, Paws and the Law. We stand strongly in favor of SB 164, Animal Cruelty and Ban the Gas Chamber.

Animal abuse is a strong predictor of interpersonal violence and possible mental illness. Animal cruelty is in essence an act of violence. Others in the home, children, elderly, or intimate partners, and in the community may also experience threats, assault, and violence.

Last summer, in Elyria, Ohio five bodies and the family dog were all found dead. Officials believe John Nelson shot and killed his wife, Robin, his three children, Gavin, 12, Brianna, 10, Liam, 6, and their pet before he turned the gun on himself and died by suicide.

Nelson apparently did not want any of his family, including their pet dog, to live.

Legislatures across the nation have been reflecting the powerful connection between animal and human cruelty in their laws. Ohio Governor DeWine signed the "Cross-Reporting" bill into law in January of 2021. This mandates reporting of suspected human abuse by veterinarians and animal control authorities to social service agencies. It also mandates the reverse, reporting of

suspected animal cruelty by social service agencies to animal control authorities.

I strongly encourage you to move this important bill, which aims to curb community violence by increasing penalties for those who recklessly abuse animals and those who aid those acts, forward in this committee for a vote, then on to the Senate floor for a full vote.

I look forward to your questions.