



Animal Welfare Institute

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TESTIMONY ON OHIO S.B. 164

Presented by Vicki Deisner, Animal Welfare Institute

Before the Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Tuesday, October 5, 2021

Chairman Schaffer, Vice-Chairman Huffman, Ranking Minority Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee, I am Vicki Deisner, the Government Affairs Representative for Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) in Ohio. We thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Ohio S.B. 164, a bill that would increase penalties for serious acts of cruelty towards companion animals, and ban the gas chamber in the state of Ohio.

At the end of September AWI conducted a day long training on the link between animal and human violence and Ohio H.B. 33 – which was passed in the last session. H.B. 33 requires the reporting of animal abuse by social workers, counselors and veterinarians, and reporting of child maltreatment by law enforcement, dog wardens and animal control officers. During this September training of over 500 professionals, the Montgomery County Court Advocates brought to my attention that the appendix for denying foster care and adoption is driven directly from the crimes listed in ORC 109.572 (A) (4), which does include misdemeanor cruelty to animals, but does not include felony cruelty to animals under ORC 959.13. Apparently, when Goddard's Law was passed, the change to ORC 959 was not reflected in ORC 109. As a contract trainer for Ohio Jobs & Family Services, I was informed that to add felony animal cruelty to the foster care and adoption list of crimes, it would need to be added to ORC109.572 through legislation.

Obviously, if misdemeanor animal cruelty is a reason to disqualify a potential foster/adoption candidate – felony animal cruelty should be also. AWI respectfully requests that Ohio S.B. 164 be amended to add felony animal cruelty to ORC 109.572 for the safety of children in Ohio.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.