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My name is Robyn McGeorge. I have been a registered veterinary technician for 30 years. I also founded Robyn's Nest animal rescue in 2005 and I have been Executive Director for 19 years. I am here to discuss the importance of house bill 351 that would prohibit abuse of a companion animal corpse.

When a high school football player in our area posted video of himself on social media with a French Bulldog that he stabbed with a knife, many people were outraged, but when we heard that the police had no evidence that the dog was alive at the time, and could therefore do nothing, we were more outraged, but also not surprised. Animal neglect, cruelty, and abandonment are all too common and the state of Ohio has historically been very behind in legislation and punishment for these crimes. We all know by now that studies show that people who abuse animals don't usually stop with animals. It's called The Link. A history of animal cruelty is a red flag. A sign of more to come in things like domestic abuse, child abuse, or mass shootings. Most people found guilty of animal abuse get a slap on the wrist.....community service, a fine, maybe a very short jail sentence if the crime is especially cruel. Most people who abuse animals don't even get that. First, they have to be reported, then you have to find a prosecutor to take the case, then you need a judge to give an appropriate sentence if they are found guilty. I believe that we need to get tougher on handling these crimes and we need to start by making stronger laws that allow for harsher punishment so that prosecutors and judges have the tools to bring these people to justice. Animals bring us joy, laughter, companionship, and comfort. We owe it to them to do better as a society. For more information on The Link you can go to the website www.nationallinkcoalition.org. But regardless of The Link, we need to do it for the animals, because it's the right thing to do.

Robyn McGeorge, RVT, Executive Director