



**House Bill 277 Proponent Testimony**  
**Ohio House Ways and Means Committee**  
**October 31, 2023**

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Troy and members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and our Ohio supporters, we write in strong support of House Bill (HB) 277, which will help protect the bonds between Ohio renters and the pets that are important members of their families.

Housing insecurity remains one of the top reasons that pets are relinquished to shelters. Tenants report difficulty in finding units that welcome their beloved companions, often due to costly fees or breed/weight restrictions. These types of policies effectively eliminate a large percentage of family dogs from living in most rental units and have been shown to disproportionately harm low-income families.

Part of the challenge, according to a 2021 industry report, is the disconnect between property owner/operators and prospective and current tenants in what pet-friendly truly means. Although 76 percent of owner/operators considered their properties pet-friendly, 72 percent of residents surveyed said that pet-friendly housing is hard to find, and 59 percent say it's too expensive.<sup>1</sup> To the detriment of many property owner/operators, this misalignment leaves money on the table as vacant units in pet-inclusive properties fill faster than those in non-pet-friendly housing and on average, residents stay 21 percent longer in housing that is pet-friendly. The study also found that fewer than 10 percent of all pets cause damages of any kind to their rental units.

In 2021, a paper was published examining costs associated with “pet-friendly” rental housing in Texas<sup>2</sup>. They examined approximately 6,000 apartments in the state’s 20 most populous cities and found that the burden of pet fees is not equitable among renters. In fact, nonrefundable pet fees (which may include one-time charges or monthly “pet rents”, or both) were more likely to be found in lower-income neighborhoods, where renters are less able to absorb additional costs.

The housing crisis in Ohio continues to grow, leaving more families with fewer choices when it comes to where they can call home. To help address this challenge and support the 33 percent of Ohio households rent their homes<sup>3</sup>, HB 277 will help incentivize housing providers to welcome families and their pets and will help reduce common restrictions that disproportionately impact low-income households. In addition to creating more options for pet owning tenants, HB 277 will provide valuable tax credits to housing providers during these times of economic uncertainty.

By expanding the availability of affordable pet-friendly housing, we can help keep pets and people together and make Ohio an even better place to live. We thank the committee for considering this important legislation and urge your favorable passage of HB 277.

**Mark Finneran**

Ohio State Director

Humane Society of the United States

---

<sup>1</sup> “2021 Pet-Inclusive Housing Report.” Michelson Found Animals and HARBI. <https://www.foundanimals.org/pets-and-housing/2021-pet-inclusive-housing-report/>.

<sup>2</sup> “Pet-Friendly for Whom? An Analysis of Pet Fees in Texas Rental Housing.” Front Vet Sci. 2021 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8606550/>

<sup>3</sup> “Ohio.” National Low Income Housing Coalition. <https://nlihc.org/oor/state/oh>.