



Dear Chairman Creech and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 148. My name is Mary Beth Bergenstein, Board Member/Volunteer for FIDO's Companion Rescue, Inc. and I support House bill 148.

FIDO's Companion Rescue. is a small, closely held, non-profit 501(c)3 organization made up of volunteers who perform vital functions in rescuing animals. In 2024 we took in 545 dogs and 100% were spayed/neutered through the outside clinic we use to manage these surgeries. In addition, we fund spay/neuter expenses for other independent rescuers, vet clinics and citizens who take strays off the street. Ohio Pet Fund has been extremely helpful in funding some of these surgeries as we rely 100% on grants and donations to cover our expenses. Without the assistance from Ohio Pet Fund dogs will go unaltered, adding to the pet overpopulation problem.

We have other initiatives within the spay/neuter program where funding is critical. We currently collaborate with a non-profit dog transport organization to move dogs from the underfunded Ohio rural shelters to our program for spay/neuter. We also are working to provide community education on basic animal care and the importance of spay/neuter. We will never be able to rescue or shelter our way out of pet overpopulation, therefore it is imperative to educate our youth and community about the importance of spaying and neutering to stop overpopulation. Funding is very important to the success of these programs.

I would like to see HB 148 pass so funding is increased and we can continue to work to reduce pet overpopulation.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Bergenstein
FIDO's Companion Rescue, Inc.