

Dear Chairman Creech and committee members:

My name is Joan Ballitch and I am a board member of Heart of Ohio Pets (HOPE), a Centerburg-based humane organization. HOPE has been the fortunate recipient of Ohio Pet Fund spay/neuter funds for several years. HOPE specifically uses these funds to pay for the spay/neuter of adoptable cats/kittens. All cats/kittens are sterilized before adoption. Since sterilized cats are significantly more likely to remain in their homes, HOPE's work via spay/neuter funds supports the goal of a cat population that does not add to community and taxpayer burdens.

As you know, spaying of female cats results in reducing the risk of mammary cancer and eliminates the risk of uterine and ovarian cancer and eliminates heat cycles. Neutering of male cats results in the reduction or elimination of undesirable habits. Neutering also results in numerous health benefits including reduction of diseases of the prostate and rectal tumors and elimination of testicular tumors. The same advantages apply to dogs.

In summary, spay/neuter funds have a significant positive effect for both cat and dog populations and for their human caretakers. Therefore, passing HB 148 will benefit both cat and dog populations and their human caretakers.