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Formerly called the Humane
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Humane Society International

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Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
The Ohio Statehouse
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Chair Schaffer, Vice Chair Koehler, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 152, legislation that would help enhance the ability of qualified wildlife rehabilitators to access and administer approved medications for humane euthanasia.

My name is Mark Finneran and I am the Ohio state director for Humane World for Animals, formerly called the Humane Society of the United States. Through our advocacy for animal protections in Ohio, I've been fortunate enough to work alongside our state's wildlife rehabilitators. Relying on donations, grants and fundraising, the staff and volunteers who run wildlife rehabilitator organizations dedicate their time to providing critical lifesaving services across our state every day. Highly trained, they work tirelessly to rehabilitate and return injured or orphaned animals back to the wild.

When an Ohioan comes across injured or orphaned wildlife, they're there to help. When severe weather or a natural disaster impacts wild animals, rehabilitators are ready to step in. And when Humane World for Animals' Animal Rescue team had boots on the ground earlier this year to assist Ashtabula County with 300+ foxes, skunks, wolf dogs and other animals who were orphaned after a fur farm operator died, you guessed it-- Ohio's wildlife rehabilitators were there to help every step of the way.

Making euthanasia decisions is a challenging aspect of wildlife rehabilitation, yet it is an integral part of being on the front lines of treating injured and orphaned animals. In those cases, SB 152 will help minimize animal suffering by allowing wildlife rehabilitation organizations to apply for a license to administer euthanasia and pre-euthanasia drugs that are considered the most humane options available. The legislation includes guardrails that mirror existing standards for animal shelters and county dog wardens and requires the employee or agent administering the medicine to be trained as a veterinary technician or euthanasia technician.

In 2022, Ohio passed SB 164 to end the use of gas chambers as a form of euthanasia for companion animals like cats and dogs in animal shelters. In the wildlife world, gas chambers are still sometimes relied upon for lack of better alternatives. Animals in gas chambers may experience distress for several minutes – clawing and calling for a way out – before finally losing consciousness. Not only can the process cause animal suffering, it can also be traumatic for the human watching them suffer. By allowing qualified organizations to access modern euthanasia medications, SB 152 can help reduce the need to utilize gas chambers and enhance the ethical and humane treatment of wild animals in our communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge favorable passage for SB 152. Ohio is a more vibrant and naturally beautiful state because of the tireless work of wildlife rehabilitators. SB 152 will help them get through the worst part of their job safely and humanely, and allow them to focus on what they do best: giving our wild neighbors a second chance at life. Thank you for considering legislation on this important issue.

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