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Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chairman Koehler, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and Members of the Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 60.

My name is Dr. Allison Lash, and I am the Medical Director at the Cleveland Animal Protective League. I write to you today to express my strong support for Senate Bill 60, particularly the provision that would allow for the establishment of a virtual Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR). As a practicing veterinarian with 19 years of experience, and in my current role as Medical Director at the Cleveland Animal Protective League, I have seen firsthand the transformative potential that telemedicine holds for the future of veterinary care.

Throughout my career, I have witnessed the evolving needs of pet owners and the changing dynamics of veterinary practice. The expectation that veterinarians will be available 60+ hours a week, often at the expense of work-life balance, has become increasingly difficult to sustain—especially as a new generation of veterinarians place more value on flexibility and work-life balance. At the same time, the demand for accessible, timely care for pets continues to grow. This legislation would help bridge that gap, offering a solution that benefits both veterinarians and pet owners alike.

There are numerous positive impacts associated with telemedicine in veterinary care, particularly the ability to establish a VCPR remotely. First and foremost, it would provide tremendous convenience to busy working clients who may struggle to take time off from work to bring their pets in for in-person appointments. Additionally, telemedicine would help those who live in rural or underserved areas where access to veterinary care is limited, ensuring that more pets can receive the care they need without the burden of long travel times or unreliable transportation options.

Furthermore, veterinary telemedicine can help alleviate the strain on busy veterinary practices. It offers veterinarians greater flexibility, allowing them to work from home or offer remote consultations, thereby improving work-life balance and attracting more practitioners to the field. This flexibility is not only a benefit to veterinary professionals but also enhances overall job satisfaction and reduces burnout, a growing concern in the veterinary community.

The ability to establish a VCPR through telemedicine would bring veterinary medicine in line with other fields of healthcare. Just as pediatricians and family doctors can establish a doctor-patient relationship and offer remote consultations, so too should veterinarians be able to do so

with our clients and their pets. This would further enable timely interventions, guidance, and follow-up care, particularly for non-emergency issues that don't require in-person examinations.

Telemedicine also offers an invaluable resource for emergency situations where pet owners may not be able to travel to a veterinary clinic immediately, such as after-hours or in rural settings. In these cases, telemedicine could be a vital tool for providing immediate guidance, triage, and care recommendations, preventing unnecessary ER visits and ensuring pets receive appropriate care in a timely manner.

I am confident that the expansion of veterinary telemedicine, including the ability to establish a VCPR through telemedicine, will help make veterinary care more accessible, efficient, and sustainable for both pet owners and veterinary professionals. I urge you to support this important legislation and recognize its potential to improve the lives of both people and pets across Ohio.

Thank you to Senator Wilkin and Senator Huffman for their hard work on this bill and once again, thank you to the Committee for considering my input on this matter. I am happy to discuss further or provide additional insight as you move forward in deliberating this legislation.

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