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**Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee  
SB 232 Sponsor Testimony**

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 provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 232.

This legislation strengthens protections to ensure that high-volume dog breeders, often referred to as puppy mills, are subject to proper regulation and oversight. It's designed to protect animals from abuse, neglect, and mistreatment, and to relieve the burden that irresponsible breeding operations place on local communities and taxpayers.

Senate Bill 232 updates the definition of a high-volume dog breeder to include any establishment that keeps, houses, and maintains six or more breeding dogs and, in return for a fee or other compensation, sells adult dogs or puppies to dog brokers, pet stores, or directly to the public. It eliminates the current threshold that ties regulation to the number of dogs sold. This threshold has allowed many breeders to exploit a loophole and avoid oversight by staying just under the sales limit. By removing that requirement, this bill ensures that regulation is based on the nature of the operation itself rather than arbitrary sales numbers.

For example, if a puppy from a puppy mill costs three thousand dollars, under current law someone could sell thirty-nine of these dogs, make over one hundred thousand dollars a year, and still not be considered a high-volume dog breeder. This gap in regulation allows

irresponsible breeders to operate without proper accountability, leaving communities to deal with the fallout.

Another key provision of the bill requires that all surgical and euthanasia procedures involving dogs in these facilities must be performed by a licensed veterinarian. This includes procedures like tail docking, dew claw removal, and ear cropping. These are invasive procedures that, when carried out by untrained individuals, can often result in serious injury, infection, or long-term suffering. There have been cases in Ohio where breeders used box cutters, dull scissors, or other unsafe tools to perform these procedures. That is completely unacceptable. These animals deserve professional medical care, and this bill ensures that only licensed veterinarians can perform those procedures.

The legislation also makes important changes to the inspection process. Under current law, high-volume breeders are typically given advance notice before inspections by the Department of Agriculture. This gives facilities time to temporarily clean up or conceal violations without actually improving conditions for the animals. Senate Bill 232 would instead require inspections to be conducted without prior notice, giving inspectors a true picture of day-to-day operations.

The bill is not only about animal welfare. It's also about protecting communities. When irresponsible breeders operate without oversight the consequences fall on local governments, shelters, law enforcement, and volunteers. Sick, neglected, or abandoned dogs do not simply disappear. They end up in the care of humane societies, rescue organizations, dog wardens, and local law enforcement, all of whom are already stretched thin.

Senate Bill 232 is a practical and compassionate response. It expands oversight, holds breeders to common-sense standards, requires surprise inspections, and helps protect both animals and the communities that care for them.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I'd be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.