Dear Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Roegner, Ranking Member DeMora and members of the committee; thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 148.

The Ohio Pet Fund has been an invaluable resource to our small, all volunteer, nonprofit group. Their process allows groups of various sizes and skill sets to apply and receive desperately needed help. Many grants are so time consuming that smaller groups just aren't able to put forth the time or have the expertise to apply. The Ohio Pet Fund is accessible to so many wonderful groups in our state.

With the funds we received we were able to have 75 cats spayed or neutered that we wouldn't have been able to afford without their help. One female cat can produce 100 offspring in her life, which leads to her offspring producing the same. So not only were we able to spay/neuter 75 cats, we prevented thousands of future kittens to be born outside. An estimated 75 percent of kittens born outside don't survive to their first birthday and an estimated 80,000 kittens didn't make it out of shelters alive in the United States in 2024 (Source: Shelter Animals Count).

The funds provided, without a doubt, save thousands of lives just from our small TNR and rescue group! So many people in my rural community care deeply about the cats they feed and care for however the cost of spays and neuters is simply out of reach. For many, they have to decide between food for their families or putting money into a stray or feral cat and that is just not feasible for them, even though they care.

If we were able to receive greater funds, we would be able to hold spay and neuter days at a local clinic which would make everything much more accessible to the public. We currently are able to afford 5-10 surgeries a week. Greater funds would go directly to surgery costs and allow us to have a much larger reach within the community.

In conclusion, passing of House Bill 148 would have such a ripple effect within many communities in Ohio. Not only would it prevent suffering and improve the lives of many animals, it would greatly improve the lives of the people who care about these animals as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Betty Miranda

Rural Ohio Cats and Kittens