



**State Representative Bill Patmon
Sponsor Testimony
HB 60
March 24, 2015**

Hello Chairman Hill, Vice Chairman Burkley, Ranking Member Patterson and fellow members of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present Sponsor Testimony on a bill that I believe is important not only for Ohio's companion animals, but also for its citizens.

You see, stories of the abuse and killing of companion animals have become rampant in the headlines of my district. However, these incidents are not confined to Cleveland. In Mansfield, a man broke the neck of a kitten in front of four young boys and discarded it in the weeds. This is troubling to me not only because of the effect this trauma will have on the boys, but also because of the link between those who abuse animals and those who abuse humans. Northeastern University and the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) found that 70% of those who committed crimes against animals had also been involved in other violent, property, drug, and disorderly crimes. The study also concluded that a person who has committed animal abuse is:

- * 5 times more likely to commit violence against people
- * 4 times more likely to commit property crimes
- * 3 times more likely to be involved in drunken or disorderly offenses¹

A number of notorious serial killers such as David Berkowitz (better known as Son of Sam) and Jeffrey Dahmer got their start killing pets—often the neighbor's pets. Last year in Lorain, a man stabbed to death a border collie that was chained up outside its home for growling at him. The Humboldt County (CA) District Attorney, Terry Farmer, said, "The link between animal abuse and more violent conduct has clearly been established. The dismembered remains of dogs and cats today could well be that of children tomorrow." I believe this quote should give us all pause. By elevating punishments for the abuse of animals, we can make the cases more visible and recognize those who may be at risk for committing future acts of violence against others. Ohio is ranked 34th in the United States for its animal protection laws.² House Bill 60 will not only protect our pets, but our children and families as well.

¹ <http://www.mspca.org/programs/cruelty-prevention/animal-cruelty-information/cruelty-to-animals-and-other-crimes.pdf>

² <http://aldf.org/custom/rankings/ALDF2012USRankingsReport.pdf>

Again, thank you Chairman Hill and members of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee.