



June 16, 2015

TO: Ohio House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee  
FROM: Ledy VanKavage, Senior Legislative Attorney  
RE: House Bill 60 - Proponent Testimony

Chairman Hill and Honorable Committee Members, my name is Ledy VanKavage. I am Senior Legislative Attorney for Best Friends Animal Society and the current Chair of the American Bar Association's Animal Law Committee. I want to thank you for letting me submit testimony on behalf of 9,000 Ohio Best Friends members who support HB 60.

Best Friends Animal Society is a nonprofit organization building no-kill programs and partnerships that will bring about a day when there are No More Homeless Pets®. The society's leading initiatives in animal care and community programs are coordinated from our Kanab, Utah, headquarters, the country's largest no-kill sanctuary.

I've been helping legislators and city councilmen craft good comprehensive dog laws since 1987.

Best Friends supports HB 60 as a public safety initiative aimed at protecting Ohioans. By prohibiting someone from knowingly committing acts of cruel treatment against companion animals, you are ultimately protecting humans from harm.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), domestic violence comes in many forms, including physical, sexual, and emotional violence, and threats. Killing, harming, or threatening to harm animals are weapons used by abusers to manipulate victims into silence and to destroy the comfort animals provide.

The Animal Legal Defense Fund makes strong statements about the link between animal abuse and domestic violence. Animal abuse is often the first visible sign a family is in trouble.

Many victims entering shelters report that their abuser has hurt, killed, or threatened family animals. Victims often admit an animal is being abused before they admit their own suffering. Animal cruelty investigations frequently unravel chronic domestic abuse.

House Bill 60 will help protect Ohioans who are in danger of becoming victims of domestic abuse.

I thank you for your consideration and a Yes vote in this important matter.