



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

Senate Agriculture Committee
Interested Party Testimony – Senate Bill 151
April 26, 2016

Chairman Hite, Vice Chairman Hackett, Ranking Member Gentile and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is the nation's largest and most effective animal protection organization. We provide free training and other resources to local shelters, municipalities and law enforcement and support our friends in the sustainable agricultural community. We have thousands of dedicated volunteers and supporters and welcome working with all stakeholders to strengthen protections for animals in Ohio. My name is Corey Roscoe and I am the State Director for The HSUS. I am testifying as an Interested Party on Senate Bill 151.

The HSUS supports regulation of dangerous animals and understand that managing animals can be a complex responsibility for state and municipal leaders and agencies mandated to serve and protect the public. Everyone wants to live in a safe community and since two-thirds of Americans share our households with companion animals, we should do everything possible to prevent harmful dog-related incidents from occurring.

Having strong dangerous dog laws is one piece of the puzzle, but having other preventative methods in place is critical. Without them, bites and attacks will continue and there will still be victims of tragedy. The HSUS believes in addressing the factors that directly contribute to creating dangerous dogs.

We suggest a renewed focus on basics such as at-large laws, and laws regulating tethering of dogs outside, which is preventative in nature, and on funding enforcement agencies to allow for proactive enforcement in order to prevent incidents as opposed to allowing them to only respond to complaints.

Since no law can fully prevent dog bites and attacks, non-legislative efforts are also needed like more pet owner support with access to services and information that equip them to best manage their dogs' behavior, and being more proactive in the approach to providing "animal control" in a community. Effective dog management hinges on knowledge of the dog population and the resources available to those dogs and their families. If citizens do not have access to affordable veterinary care or good information about pet care, the root causes of overpopulation and unwanted, free-roaming pets cannot be successfully addressed.

We stand ready to support legislators in strengthening dangerous dog laws, while providing dog owners with due process and making it incumbent on owners to manage their dog's behavior to prevent injury or threat.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee.

Corey Roscoe
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The Humane Society of the United States