Written Testimony on House Bill 506
House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee
Sharon Harvey, President and CEO, Cleveland Animal Protective League
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Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony on House Bill 506, legislation to amend Ohio's high-volume dog breeder law.

I am the President & CEO of the Cleveland Animal Protective League (APL), which is the humane society for Cuyahoga County and one of the largest animal shelters in Ohio. We are a private, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization organized under Ohio Revised Code 1717, and as such, are also authorized to appoint humane agents who enforce Ohio's animal protection laws.

The Cleveland APL would prefer that high-volume, commercial dog breeding not be permitted in our state due to the strain that it puts on breeding dogs. Dogs are social, companion animals. We do not believe they should life their lives in a cage in a facility producing puppies for profit. However, we understand these businesses lawfully exist, and that it is the will of the legislature to enact protections governing this practice that at least will improve the care and husbandry of these dogs. We offer this testimony with suggested modifications to the legislation under consideration.

Please consider the following changes to strengthen protections in House Bill 506:

- Regarding the definition of "high volume breeder". Current law does not state a number of breeding dogs, so we suggest that this bill does not tie the definition to a number. **We also strongly oppose the carve out for dogs bred for hunting, or any other specialized, purposes in the bill. Why should these dogs not qualify for the same protections that other dogs will have under the bill?**
- The bill currently requires that if the flooring surface consists of material that is not solid, there must be a solid resting area. However, it does not state if there is a minimum size for the resting area. We request that this be amended to require the resting area be at least as big as the length of the dog.

- The bill deals nicely with temperature requirements, but there is no language requiring access to shelter in inclement weather. We believe it is important this be included.
- As mentioned previously, dogs are social animals. The bill requires human interaction with the dog, which we feel is positive. However, there is no specified minimum amount of time so it would be easy for a breeder to claim this requirement has been fulfilled without a meaningful amount of interaction the dog. We ask that a minimum amount of interaction of 20 minutes per day be added, but that a provision be made to take the behavior of each individual animal into consideration to ensure this interaction is in the best interest of the animal at any given time.

- Finally, Section 956.02 regarding exempted kennels, is not currently addressed in this bill draft, but we ask that it be amended in this bill to include humane societies formed under 1717.05. The Ohio Department of Agriculture has told us it was their intent that humane societies be exempt and we feel this would be a nice opportunity to clear up the initial oversight.

Ohio's previous attempts to regulate this practice have fallen short in recent years. If our state is going to continue to permit high-volume dog breeding, strong revisions need to be made in our Revised Code to ensure the safety and welfare of this vulnerable population of dogs, and while not perfect, we believe this bill is a good starting point.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this legislation. I appreciate thoughtful consideration of this important issue.