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Sponsor Testimony
Senate Bill 167
Agriculture & Natural Resources
Chair, Senator Frank Hoagland
Wednesday, November 6

Good afternoon, Chairman Hoagland, Vice-Chair Schaffer, Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the Agricultural & Natural Resources Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of Senate Bill 167, which would prohibit a person from recklessly euthanizing any domestic animal by the use of a gas chamber.

Animal shelters have made great strides in reducing euthanasia rates nationally and here in Ohio. Animal shelters share the common goal of working to eliminate the need to euthanize healthy, social, adoptable animals. However, there are times when euthanasia of shelter animals is necessary to end their suffering or to protect public safety. When animals must be euthanized in a shelter setting, the most humane and highly preferred method is euthanasia by injection, performed by a properly trained technician.

Gas chambers used in animal shelters are small, dark boxes filled with carbon monoxide (CO) or carbon dioxide (CO₂). They are still used by some here in Ohio to euthanize animals. Under the best circumstances, it can take minutes before an animal loses consciousness inside a gas chamber, during which time it experiences terror and distress.

Leading national animal welfare organizations including American Humane, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), and the Humane Society of the United States consider "euthanasia by injection," known as EBI, to be the most humane and widely preferred means of euthanasia for shelter animals. When shelter animals are injected with proper euthanasia drugs by a trained professional, they can lose consciousness in as little as 3-5 seconds and lose the ability to feel stress or



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pain almost immediately. The process is painless, safe, and humane. It is the same process performed in private veterinary practices on a beloved pet.

Because gas chambers must be calibrated and maintained, their usage often costs more money than EBI. A cost analysis was conducted in 2007 by American Humane comparing the cost of EBI and gas chambers. According to their results, EBI is less costly to animal shelters. The study showed that the cost of carbon monoxide poisoning in gas chambers was more than twice that of EBI. On average, EBI generated a cost savings of almost \$3.00 per animal. This legislation would help ensure that our local animal shelters are using the most modern, cost-effective techniques.

Currently, 27 states have a formal ban on the use of gas chambers for domestic animals. Ohio is one of only four states where there is no ban and gas chamber usage on domestic animals is confirmed and also further suspected. My office has been working with local representatives from The Humane Society of the United States, the Ohio Veterinary Medical Association, and others to shape this bill. We look forward to continuing to work with our local partners and the committee to ensure broad support from all of our stakeholders here in Ohio.

Gas chamber usage for routine shelter animal euthanasia can cause unnecessary animal suffering. Passage of this bill will demonstrate Ohio's support for the humane treatment of animals at all stages of their lives by officially banning the use of any remaining gas chambers for shelter animal euthanasia. For those reasons, I ask that you support a swift passage of Senate Bill 167.

Chairman Hoagland and members of the Committee, I appreciate your attention and consideration of this important issue. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.