

**Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources
Committee
Sub HB 67, Veterinarian Student Debt Assistance
Program**

**Proponent Testimony by Beth Sheehan
November 17, 2020**

Good afternoon, Chair Hoagland, Vice Chair Schaffer, Ranking Minority Member O'Brien, and distinguished members of the Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,

I am Beth Sheehan, a Hamilton County resident, who stands before you today, representing a broad, grassroots coalition of dog and cat advocates and engaged, Ohio voters who enthusiastically support the passage of Sub HB 67, Veterinarian Student Debt Assistance Program.

This bill is a home run for Ohio! There is no opposition. There are no downsides. It is a great tool for recruitment and retention of vets. It offers assistance to low-income families, who cannot afford veterinary care for their pets. It eases the burden on county budgets, already straining under the economic downturn, and who have no surplus funds for their animal shelters. It saves animal lives. Not many bills can save lives.

Let me tell you the story of Jeff, a homeless veteran living in an abandoned RV with no running water in Cincinnati. Jeff has a large heart for animals. He picks up and rescues cats and dogs dumped along the Ohio River. He now tends to four dogs and four cats. His

beloved animals give him essential comfort and vital companionship.

Thanks to UCAN, a nonprofit spay-neuter clinic, all eight of Jeff's



animals were sterilized, vaccinated, treated for some medical problems at no cost. UCAN also donated pet food and dog and cat toys.

Jeff cried and was thankful and relieved when he learned of UCAN's generosity to his pets. He knew a couple down the road that was out of food for their cat and dog. So, he was able to share part of what he received with that family in need.

Jeff demonstrates amazing compassion, tending to his vulnerable animal friends, especially during these heartbreaking times.

Jeff has already given so much for his country. It is a blessing that UCAN could ease some of his worries.

The pro bono works of this bill offer so much to Ohio residents, like Jeff, who are struggling day to day, and whose animals are an integral Tpart of their families.

With the passage of Sub HB 67, we recognize the compassionate, altruistic work of our veterinarians; we hasten fiscal efficiency of our county governments; we attain a higher standard of humanity for ourselves.

I appreciate the openness of the leadership and members of the Senate Agriculture Committee to learn more about this significant bill. I welcome your questions.