

I regret not being able to provide testimony in person regarding SB 34. By way of introduction, I am Raphael Pollock. I am a cancer surgeon who specializes in sarcoma, a rare cancer of connective tissues such as bone, muscle, cartilage, tendon, nerve sheath, blood vessels, and fat. I have had the privilege of caring for sarcoma patients for more than 35 years and have also led a sarcoma research laboratory that has had continuous NIH/NCI and Department of Defense peer-reviewed research funding since 1984. Currently I also serve as Director of The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center, and we are so very grateful for the robust support that the State of Ohio provides for our patient care and cancer research efforts!

Because of the rarity of sarcomas (< 1% of adult cancers), it has been very difficult to assemble dedicated teams of sarcoma experts in both the clinical and research arenas. We are very fortunate to have one of the five largest sarcoma multidisciplinary care and research programs in the entire United States here at The Ohio State University. We have more than 30 currently active sarcoma clinical trials, but there are many critical research questions that will be difficult to answer in human sarcoma patient populations. For example, defining the role of immunotherapy in sarcoma will ultimately require large numbers of sarcoma patients who have failed more standard therapies, many of whom will not live long enough to validate these exciting new treatments. Canine models will be ideal to address this possibility for two reasons: 1) sarcoma is the most common form of cancer in dogs, and 2) the canine immune system is very similar to that of humans, especially regarding those components most amenable to positive modulation as an effective anti-sarcoma future immune-based treatment. Of note, such clinical trials are only conducted in dogs already diagnosed with sarcoma rather than inoculating disease-free dogs with sarcoma, so therapies to be tested have the potential to benefit these sarcoma-bearing animals.

I urge positive consideration of SB 34 which will designate July as "sarcoma awareness month". This will be so very helpful in raising public awareness about this very rare form of cancer. It will also lay the groundwork for helping dog owners to understand the prevalence of sarcoma in their pets and the availability of clinical trials at centers such as The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine so that lessons learned can be most rapidly applied to human patients who suffer from this lethal form of cancer.