

TO: Special Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources
FROM: Nate Meador, Interim President and Chief Development & Marketing Officer
DATE: January 27, 2017
RE: Support for HB2097: Updating the Kansas Pet Animal Act (KPAA)

Chair Hoffman and Members of the Committee

My name is Nate Meador with the Great Plains SPCA in Merriam KS. Great Plains SPCA is the Kansas City Metro's most comprehensive, non-profit, humane agency for pets and their human companions serving a bi-state region. It is our goal to help pets lead better, healthier lives, turn homeless pets into beloved companions, keep pets out of area shelters and with their families whenever possible, and to reduce euthanasia by delivering a no-kill solution to our community. To accomplish this, Great Plains SPCA takes a three-pronged approach to animal welfare. This three-pronged approach really makes our organization unique from others in the area. Our strong **prevention programs**, such as our spay/neuter program, is preventing unwanted litters and reducing shelter intake and euthanasia across the Metro. Through our **adoption program**, and live-release rate of 97%, we are creating families. With our strong focus on **pet retention programs** such as our public affordable vet care, community outreach, seniors programs and legislative initiatives, we are working hard to keep the bond between pets and people strong.

Our arms reach to not only support local pets in need, but also extend to help pets at risk in communities surrounding the KC Metro. Last year, we served over 23,000 pets at our three locations in the Merriam Campus. With our new Independence, MO Campus, we are now the only animal welfare agency with a bi-state presence in the region, and we expect to serve 35,000 pets this year – more than any other animal welfare agency in the area. You may be familiar with our legacy organizations as Great Plains SPCA was formed through a merger of Animal Haven and No More Homeless Pets KC, which took place June 15, 2011. We have a solid 50-year history of improving lives in our community.

In 2016, we served 1,228 families by providing education and assistance with our programs, more than 25,000 pets receive advanced medical care from our Veterinary Care Center, and 15,316 pet meals were delivered to the homebound through our SASSY program. In 2016, our foster program had 493 homes providing temporary care, 6,724 pets were adopted, and 1,493 pets were reunited with their families. Our organization employees over 120 individuals and we have an annual budget of \$6.5 million to serve the community.

I ask you today to move **HB 2097** forward to the full house with amendments that would address the following:

- Make licensees accountable and charge a fee for re-inspections, no contacts or refusal visits and failing an inspection.
- Licensees should not be notified of an inspection unless they have not failed inspections for three years.
- Licensees that fail 3 inspections in 24 months should have their license revoked.
- Amend the \$30 for fosters to \$20. These are individuals helping shelters and rescues across the state and tripling their fee seems excessive.

The following changes in the bill will have a great impact on animals, shelters and rescues in our

state:

1. **Access to medical records:** It is critically important that we provide Inspectors for the Department of Agriculture the appropriate tools to perform their jobs. Inspectors should have access to all medical records for pets in the possession of all licensees. Currently in the KPAA, Inspectors do not have access to medical records for USDA licensed facilities. Such records are essential for Inspectors to ensure that animals on premise are receiving adequate and appropriate medical care. Failure to allow Inspectors access to medical records for USDA licensed facilities costs the state, the department and our constituent's money.
2. **Premise inspection schedule:** The change in language in section 8 (b) from "may" inspect to "shall" inspect is an important improvement to the law. Defining the frequency schedule of inspections in the statute, based on performance history of a premise, will give the department the ability to devote their time and resources where they are most needed, focusing on those facilities that continually have violations or fail inspections
3. **Offsite Adoptions:** Adoption events off of the premise of shelters and rescues is critical in getting animals adopted into permanent loving homes and gives them other avenues for adoption.

I hope you will move this bill forward with amendments to help the Department of Agriculture protect the health, safety and welfare of companion animals in Kansas. Thank you.

Sincerely

Nate Meador

Interim President and Chief Development & Marketing Officer

Great Plains SPCA

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