



TO: Special Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources  
FROM: Kate Meghji, Executive Director  
DATE: January 21, 2015  
RE: Support for HB2030: Updating the Kansas Pet Animal Act (KPAA)

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am the executive director of the Lawrence Humane Society, a member of the Pet Animal Coalition of Kansas, a member of the Society of Animal Welfare Administrators, and I have been involved with animal sheltering and welfare for more than 10 years.

Responsible and humane animal shelters and rescues in Kansas, like the Lawrence Humane Society, accept and care for the State's 100,000+ unwanted, abused, overbred, surplus and abandoned cats and dogs every year. As non-profit or municipal organizations, we are not funded or reimbursed by the State or any national animal organizations and we support the State's economy by paying hundreds of thousands of sales tax dollars and more than \$30 million invested annually in our local communities. We are able to serve the needs of this State's homeless animals because our communities generously support us with donations and thousands of volunteer hours each year.

HB2030 has the support of the Kansas Pet Animal Advisory board, the Department of Agriculture, the Pet Animal Coalition of Kansas, and numerous other pet animal organizations and facilities in the State, and represents the time and commitment of animal shelters, rescues, veterinarians and breeders working together to propose changes to the KPAA that we all agree are in the best interests of our various businesses and organizations, and the animals who are in our care. Kansas is behind a vast majority of states in animal welfare legislation, and the adoption of changes in HB2030 is a much-needed step in the process of getting Kansas in line with currently accepted best practices in animal care in the country.

In addition to the recommendations made by my colleagues this morning, I am here to respectfully encourage you to consider the following as crucial pieces of the proposed changes to the KPAA:

- I. Facility Inspections: While the proposed changes to the KPAA are ones that we support, there is no way to ensure that facilities comply with required animal housing standards without regular inspection. My organization has been inspected by the State three times in the last three years, and I was shocked to learn that there are many licensed breeding facilities and shelters in Kansas have never been inspected. To minimize the financial impact and time required by the State to perform these inspections, facilities with no violations can have a longer inspection cycle and be inspected on a complaint basis, and those with more violations will receive the attention they deserve to ensure compliance with the laws.

***We request that you compel the Department of Agriculture to inspect every facility by changing the wording from "may inspect" to "shall inspect" as outlined in Section 8, part b of HB2030 and accept the language regarding inspection frequency as proposed.***

2. **Adoption Events:** Licensed animal shelters and rescue networks often need to be innovative when marketing homeless animals for adoption. Barriers to adoption, such as location, limit the audience of potential adopters to those who specifically come to an animal shelter to adopt. Under the current law, a pet animal adoption must take place at the licensed facility, which adds a level of complication to offsite adoption events, and limits the number of potential adopters by requiring the both the adopter and shelter staff to relocate from the adoption event to the animal shelter to sign the adoption contract. With technological advances and well-trained staff and volunteers, animal shelters and rescues are able to provide high quality adoption counseling, application processing, and payment of adoption fees at any location. Inconveniencing the well-intentioned members of the public who wish to adopt a homeless animal by requiring a second trip to another location makes pet adoption less appealing, and limits shelters' and rescue networks' ability to impact and educate larger pieces of our communities. Offsite adoption events are typically one-day events that do not require special animal housing, and are a widely accepted practice across the country.

**We request that you allow licensed animal shelters and rescue networks to perform offsite adoptions, as outlined in Section 2 of HB2030.**

3. **Animal Shelter Definition:** To ensure that facilities or individuals who care for homeless, injured, or abandoned animals are compliant with the Kansas Pet Animal Act, the Department of Agriculture needs to be able to perform inspections on premises where animals are being housed, as noted above. However, the changes in **Section 3 part f** removes terminology that reflects individuals who may be collecting or amassing animals in an unhealthy manner (such as hoarders).

**We request that the changes in Section 3, part f of HB2030 be adopted as recommended, with the following words added back as in the original KPAA "... Animal shelter also includes a premises of an individual or organization, profit or nonprofit, maintaining 20 or more dogs or cats, or both, for the purpose of **collecting, accumulating, amassing or** maintaining the animals or offering the animals for adoption."**

4. **Gas Chambers:** As currently defined in the Kansas Pet Animal Act, euthanasia is defined as "the humane destruction of an animal". Only 10 states still allow for the euthanasia of dogs and cats utilizing carbon monoxide chambers, as the practice is dangerous for both the person performing the act and the animal being destroyed, and does not ensure "humane destruction" of animals, as it is a frightening and stressful experience that culminates in a slow death for conscious animals. Euthanasia by injection of sodium pentobarbital, as performed by veterinarians in private practice, is more efficient, more humane, and safer for those performing the euthanasias.

**We support Section 12, part a of HB2030 banning the use of carbon monoxide chambers for euthanasia.**

I want to thank each of your for your service and dedication to Kansas, and your consideration of HB2030 as a means to allow our state to join the majority of United States which have responsible and enforceable pet animal care acts. The proposed changes to the KPAA are the result of hard work and compromise, and reflect the consensus of the Kansas Pet Animal Advisory Board, the Kansas Department of Agriculture, and has the support of many animal organizations and businesses in the State.

I am happy to answer any questions or provide any additional information that you may require.

Thank you,

Kate Meghji

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