

Oppose Senate Bill 97

My name is Katie Barnett, I am a Kansas licensed attorney who practices animal law and works with municipalities on local animal-related ordinances. Primarily my practice involves working with lawmakers and law enforcement on enhancing public safety and the humane treatment of animals. As such, I am here today to oppose SB 97 as it is wholly antithetical to enhancing public safety and the humane treatment of animals. I am most concerned about public safety.

As a past Vice Chair of the American Bar Association's (ABA) Animal Law Committee, I urge this Committee to review the American Bar Association's full resolution urging federal, state, and local legislative bodies to enact comprehensive laws that prohibit the possession, sale, breeding, import of transfer of dangerous wild animals, like big cats, bears, wolves, primates, and dangerous reptiles – the epitome of what SB 97 is attempting to circumvent.¹ The ABA urges that these laws should include reasonable exemptions for facilities accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and research institutions, which current K.S.A. §32-1301 already does.

Clouded leopards must remain regulated just like any other dangerous regulated animal. Clouded leopards are not domesticated and pose the same risk to public safety as lions, tigers, and other big cats.²

Moreover, allowing full or intermediate contact with wild animals is inherently dangerous. This bill says as much in the proposed language in §32-1306(e)(5) “. . . [T]he *handling or petting of a dangerous regulated animal is inherently dangerous and may result in scratches, bites or other injuries.*” First, the legislature should not be in the business of outlining text for legal disclaimers within written legislation; that should be left up to owners, businesses, and insurers. Second, and more importantly, families across this state trust you to enact laws that protect their health, safety, and welfare. Permitting an activity that is “inherently dangerous” and stating so in plain language in the bill is disheartening and reckless.

I do not purport to be an expert on wild animals. I spend most of my time trying to help state, county, and local governments manage the public safety risks of living with dogs and cats which have been domesticated for thousands of years through selective breeding. This bill adds wild clouded leopards and other dangerous regulated animals to our public safety workload. Dogs and cats keep us plenty busy.

I implore this committee to vote NO on Senate Bill 97.



Katie Bray Barnett

¹ American Bar Association, Resolution 105, 2015:

<http://www.dissidentusa.com/ALCDocs/ALCResolutions/TIPS%20ALC%20DWA%20Resolution%20Passed.pdf>

² http://cloudedleopard.org/Documents/Husbandry_manual.pdf