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JOHN BRADFORD
40TH DISTRICT

TO: Chairman Representative Rubin, Members, House Committee on
Corrections and Juvenile Justice
FROM: Representative John Bradford
DATE: January 27, 2016
SUBJECT: House Bill 2451

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2451

K.S.A. 2015 Supp. 38-2223 requires that people working in certain specified professions are required to report to proper authorities any and all known and/or suspected child abuse/neglect.

When any of the listed persons has reason to suspect that a child has been harmed as a result of physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect or sexual abuse, the person shall report the matter promptly as provided for in the above stated statute.

House Bill 2451 simply adds the category of Animal Control Officers, as defined by K.S.A. 47-1701 (k) and amendments there to and persons authorized to take custody of an animal pursuant to K.S.A. 2015 Supp. 21-6412(e) and amendments thereto, when investigating cruelty to animals, to be added to the list of mandated reporters.

Presently, there is no requirement for an Animal Control Officer to report anything regarding children, regardless of what he/she might observe.

Animal Control Officers, similar to police patrols make random patrols of their cities/counties as well as responding to calls for assistance. In the performance of these duties they have visibility of many issues beyond the scope of their assigned mission of identifying animal abuse/neglect.

Very often, abuse of children includes abuse of their beloved pets. The child may show no sign, but if the animals do, it could indicate that the situation is toxic. Even if children are not being physically harmed or neglected, being a witness to animal cruelty has a lifelong negative impact on children. Intervention can prevent that, and help overcome any damage that has already been done.

Some people are more likely to report animal abuse than child maltreatment. Pets go outdoors often, or they are there all the time. It is easy for people to see their condition and environment. Abuse/neglect of animals is likely to occur outdoor where others can observe, abuse and maltreatment of children is less likely to occur in public.

A family that is known to or suspected of abusing/neglecting animals under their care may also be neglecting, or abusing their children. The Animal Control Officer provides one more set of eyes to assess this concern and bring it to the attention of the proper authorities.

I ask for your support on passing this bill out of committee.

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