



Sen. Dan Kerschen
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
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VIA EMAIL

March 23, 2021

Chairman Kerschen and Members of the Committee,

The Lawrence Humane Society serves the Lawrence/Douglas County area by taking in animals that may be ill, injured, or homeless. We see over 4,500 animals a year from the City of Lawrence Animal Control and Douglas County Sheriffs Department, as well as from residents from our area. Our organization nurtures the human-animal bond by providing shelter, care, and advocacy for homeless and abused animals, as well as resources for the pets and people in our community.

SB 269 bans the private ownership of wolves and non-human primates in Kansas. Reasonable exemptions from these prohibitions are available to experienced, qualified, and professionally-run zoological facilities, including zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, wildlife sanctuaries, and research facilities.

Currently, 12 Kansas counties and 41 cities ban private ownership of wolves and non-human primates, but surrounding areas remain at risk without a statewide law. Douglas County prohibits owning primates, but our organization was recently made aware of two properties possessing non-human primates. Emergency responders are forced to place themselves in unnecessary danger when responding to attacks, confiscating animals, or capturing escaped animals. Exotic animals kept as pets often end up in inhumane and unsafe conditions because unprepared owners lacked the knowledge and resources to properly care for them. Taxpayers, animal organizations, and local government are left footing the bill using limited budgets. Our organization has no strategic plan on how to house dangerous animals like wolves or primates should any of these incidents occur. Additionally, staff do not possess the specialized training to care for these animals without putting themselves in danger. Having wolves or non-human primates in our communities is untenable.

Animal health professionals agree that wolves and non-human primates should not be kept as pets. Regardless of training, handling, or the passage of time, a wolf or non-human primate will never be a domesticated animal. Forcing them into the role of a "pet" often produces heartbreaking results for both the humans and animals. Primates present an additional hazard because they can transmit numerous infectious diseases (some potentially fatal) to humans. We urge you to support SB 269.

Sincerely,

Katie Barnett, Animal Welfare Counsel

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