

Chairman Kerschen and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding House Bill 2477. My name is Amy Cox and I am providing this written testimony as a strong proponent of HB 2477, as amended by the full House. The testimony I provide is based on a lifetime of work with animals and the knowledge of the pet breeding business gained over this time. My experiences go back to the age of 5, when I helped my brother rescue rabbits on the playground when children had brutally killed their mother. Through my lifetime, I have had a close relationship with my brother who worked for a shelter and ultimately became a K9 police officer and works with his mounted police unit. I have also rescued, transported, and fostered many animals. I helped start a Pet Ministry at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, KS and have worked with many shelters and rescues throughout Missouri and Kansas. In my former professional life, I worked to provide more adequate laws related to pet breeding in Missouri, where more than 1200 substandard breeders lost their licenses. I am very knowledgeable of the ways some breeders skirt the law, thereby wasting tax payer money and causing great misery to animals.

Last year, testimonies before this very Committee highlighted issues regarding several inefficiencies in the Animal Facility Inspection Program, including the amount of money expended for no-contact inspections, failed inspections, focused inspections, and re-inspections. Subsequent debate within the legislature overwhelmingly supported inspections and re-inspections without raising fees on shelters and rescues.

The Kansas Pet Animal Act was created to govern the health, safety, and welfare of Kansas companion animals. However, currently this Act is not being enforced effectively, primarily due to the prior notification breeders receive of an upcoming inspection. Instead, the state of Kansas should follow the same standard as our state hospitals, nursing care facilities, child care facilities, restaurants, and even liquor stores are required to follow – inspections without prior notification. In my experiences, breeders that are conducting themselves with integrity, welcome inspections as a way to show their high standards and wish breeders that did not live up to these standards would lose their license, thereby cleaning up the industry.

Kansans value the integrity of the Kansas Pet Animal Act. Companion animals live in our homes and sleep in our beds: Their health and welfare affect all of us. Let's improve the integrity of the Animal Facility Inspection Program by conducting inspections without prior notification.

I ask the Committee to support HB 2477 as amended by the House. My contact information is below, should you wish to reach out for more information.

Thank you.

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