

The following is my offered testimony regarding SB 269. I would also like to testify over zoom/webex:

My name is Nika Orebaugh and I am writing as a representative of the Kansas Animal Control Association. I would like to offer testimony as a strong proponent regarding the necessity of SB 269 to protect not only the animal control and law enforcement personnel that serve our state but, also, it's citizens.

SB 269 removes the ability for private ownership of wolves and non-human primates within the state of KS. While many counties, including my own Sedgwick County, have local codes that prohibit the private ownership of apex predators, such as wolves, without a statewide law such animals are still, regularly, sold or traded to residents in our area. In Sedgwick County we have had cases involving wolves, both full blooded and hybrids, repeatedly, throughout my career as an animal control officer.

Our most recent encounter involved a hybrid wolf who came into the shelter emaciated. Due to lack of care/understanding of cues involved with wild animals this animal bit two people before a handler was found that could transfer him safely to a wolf sanctuary in New Mexico. Emaciated, this intact male wolf hybrid, weighed in at 78lbs. By the time he transferred he weighed upwards of 130lbs. In the above instance he was a hybrid, a full blooded animals, like the one who escaped transport inside the city limits of Wichita in 2020 could have gone even worse if the animal hadn't been contained as quickly. In that instance the animal had been sold to an individual inside Sedgwick County who could not control him and, in fear, he had attempted to transport the animal to another individual before it's escape inside the city limits of Wichita near riverside park. Due to the expedient work of Wichita Animal Control the wolf was remanded to the Wichita Animal Shelter but, quickly became aggressive and a danger to staff who had to interact with the animal.

Wolves are not pets and, as was the case of our hybrid, social cues involved with play behavior or resource guarding do not line up with normal dog behavior. This leads to bite incidents as the animals are 'friendly' enough to approach but, traditionally trained officers are unsure how to interact. Purebred wolves have a much higher energy and drive and can become aggressive when displaced from their leader/alpha. They are virtually impossible for a traditionally trained animal control officer to obtain without injury.

In Sedgwick County we have also had interactions with non-human primates. While we have been fortunate enough not to interact with chimpanzees, orangutans, or other such large primates in the last fifteen years we do get our share of small monkeys. Two such instances have occurred in the last three years alone. Monkeys are not part of traditional animal control training and are absolutely not something that smaller town ACOs are expecting to deal with in KS. Our primary concern when dealing with primates is zoonotic disease. The most notable viral infections transmittable by primates are Herpes B and HIV but, there are a host of other zoonotic viruses and infections that are easily transmittable by such a close genetic code. These include, but, are not limited to, ebola, yellow fever, and tuberculosis.

I truly appreciate your time and effort involved with the reading of my testimony. I hope you will consider it while making your decisions regarding SB 269.

Respectfully,

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