

Approved: 3-7-96
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson David Corbin at 10:00 a.m. on March 6, 1996 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department
Jill Wolters, Revisor of Statutes
Lila McClafin, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:
Renee Harris, Shelter Manager, Lawrence Humane Society, Lawrence, KS

Others attending: See attached list

A motion to approve the minutes of March 5 was made by Senator Tillotson. The motion was seconded by Senator Morris. Motion carried.

Fiscal note for **HB 2645** was distributed.

The hearing on **HB 2645 - care of animals who are in custody pursuant to the cruelty to animals statutes by an animal shelter.**

Renee Harris testified for the bill. She thought this law would provide for the owner of the animals to be responsible for the financial burden for the care and treatment of their animals while they are in custody. This bill would allow the agencies involved to petition the court for disposition if financial responsibilities are not met (Attachment 1). Ms. Harris responded to questions.

Written testimony from Kelli Larkins, President, Kansas Animal Control Association, supporting the bill was distributed (Attachment 2).

The hearing was closed. Chairperson Corbin called for discussion or action on the bill. Senator Clark moved that the bill be passed. Senator Sallee seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 7, 1996.

March 7, 1996

Lawrence Humane Society
Renee Harris, Shelter Manager
1805 E. 19th Street
Lawrence, KS 66046
(913) 843-6835 Phone
(913) 843-6369 FAX

Senate Committee of Agriculture
House Bill 2645

Chairman Corbin and members of the Committee:

Good Morning. My name is Renee Harris and I am the Shelter Manager at the Lawrence Humane Society. Our facility investigates cruelty complaints in the following geographical areas: City of Lawrence, Douglas County, Jefferson County, Johnson County, Franklin County, Miami County, Leavenworth County and Anderson County. We responded to seven hundred and twenty complaints in 1995. This was nearly a thirty percent increase from the previous year. This particular bill would only influence less than one percent of all cases investigated. Most of the situations are resolved through education. I presently have six dogs, on five separate cases being held in my facility. The longest an animal has been required to be held has been one and a half years. To allow some insight to the severity of the cruelty cases in which charges are brought I have brought several photos each with its own synopsis. Only one of the dogs being held presently would be considered adoptable.

There are several points I wish to make as to the necessity of such a bill. Firstly, the animals themselves are required to be confined for long extended periods of time. Their expenses in care and rehabilitation are extremely costly. The holding facilities involved will most likely incur costs ranging in the high hundreds to thousands of dollars per case. Although restitution is generally part of the judgment we seldom receive even a partial payment. This presents a huge burden to the not-for-profit organizations involved, and in the case of municipal pounds, cost to the taxpayers. Secondly, across the state cases of severe neglect and animal abuse, as well as, dog-fighting are allowed to continue simply because the agencies are unable to accept the financial burdens. The final point is the simple fact that as long as these animals are being required to be held other animals are being euthanized due to lack of space. For example, for each of the six dogs I am holding presently, twelve other dogs or pups are being euthanized every week. this means that twelve potentially adoptable companion animals are being destroyed weekly to make room for five unadoptable dogs and one that will have to wait for up to a year to be placed up for adoption with a slim chance at that.

The burden of the financial responsibilities of the care and treatment of these animals belongs on the owner not the agencies who are enforcing our state and local laws. This law would provide just that. This law would allow the agencies involved to petition the court for disposition if financial responsibilities are not met. I ask the committee members to support this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration to this issue.

*Senate Ag Co
3-6-96
attachment 1*



P.O. Box 446, Olathe, Kansas 66061

March 6, 1996

re: House Bill No. 2645

Dear Chairman Corbin & Committee Members,

My name is Kelli Larkins, from Olathe, Kansas and I am the President of the Kansas Animal Control Association (KACA). I am in support of House Bill No. 2645.

The Kansas Animal Control Association is a not-for-profit organization representing over 30 animal care & control agencies across the state of Kansas.

Right now an act of cruelty to an animal is being committed. Sometimes animal care and control is notified and sometimes not. If it is reported sometimes the agency will press charges and sometimes not. Why not? Because it will cost too much money and there will not be enough space to house an animal or several animals for the length of time the law takes to complete a criminal case. A criminal case involving animals can last more than 8 months but more realistically it will take at least 12 months and closer to 24 months to complete. So to illustrate, take one animal and house that one animal for an average of 18 months and on the low end, say it cost the shelter \$8.00 a day to care for that animal, it will cost the shelter approximately \$4300 per animal for basic care. This does not include any medical expenses that the shelter may incur. Then consider that animal being caged for 18 months, 540 days with minimal exercise and limited human contact.

Why do we continue to punish these animals? You can change this by passing House Bill #2645. Let the adoptable animals be adopted and let us euthanize those that we know need to be euthanized. Let the shelters recover their costs. Let the animal care and control professionals do their jobs and put a stop to the cruelty.

Sincerely,

Kelli Larkins, President
Kansas Animal Control Association
PO Box 446
Olathe, KS 66051

"Promoting Performance & Professionalism" *Senate Ag Co*
3-6-96
Attachment 2