

Testimony of Crystal Swann Blackdeer, President, Leavenworth County Humane Society, Inc., to Senate Agriculture Committee February 22, 2012

Senator Taddiken and Members of the Committee:

I am President of the Board, and a full-time volunteer for Leavenworth County Humane Society. Thank you for the opportunity to talk with you today.

SB 414 makes two significant improvements to the Kansas Pet Animal Act.

First, it requires licensees under the Act who breed, sell, and distribute greyhounds meet the same standards as all other breeders of dogs.

Second, it requires adequate veterinary care for animals in USDA licensed facilities.

Unfortunately, SB 414 represents a step back in helping to insure that pet animals produced in Kansas for sale across state lines. By deleting KSA 47-1712(c), this bill threatens the integrity of a multi-million dollar industry made up of small business owners in Kansas. It also opens Kansas up to the likelihood of sick pets being transferred to other states. Quite an embarrassment for a state who should be a standard-setter in agriculture, and expensive to fix.

Another failure of SB 414 is that it does not address a vulnerability created by the permissive nature of the current program of inspections conducted by the Department of Animal Health. Changing the word "may" to "shall" as it refers to (at a minimum) annual inspections of licensees under the Act is the only way to insure compliance. If we must inspect gasoline pumps annually, why can we not inspect licensees under the Kansas Pet Animal Act? Inspections protect these small businesses, shelters, kennels, pet shops, etc. by helping them comply with standards of the Act. Inspections also identify those repeat offenders who should be shut down, and hopefully stop problems before they truly damage the pet industry in Kansas.

Regular inspections encourage compliance. Without inspections, the Kansas Pet Animal Act is merely a suggestion.

Kansas has a reputation to protect if we want to remain a credible and respected part of the Animal Health Corridor.

I applaud the improvements to the Act currently in SB 414, encourage the retention of subparagraph c of KSA 47-1712, and reinstating a requirement for at least annual inspections of licensees under the Kansas Pet Animal Act.