



Testimony of Midge Grinstead

Senior State Director – The Humane Society of the United States

Chairman Hoffman and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 2097.

I am the senior state director for The Humane Society of the United States. As a past shelter director, licensee and Governor's Companion Animal Advisory Board member, I know the important role that shelters, rescues and foster homes play in animal welfare in our state, and I support them in their efforts.

In my role as Kansas State Director, I have helped these licensees handle the problems and demands of daily shelter life and handling the burden and stress brought forth by companion animal overpopulation, puppy mills, cruelty and abandonment. I want to point out that this bill does some good things, for shelters and rescues including adding the rescue network, a rescue network representative on the Governor's Companion Animal Board and mobile adoptions. However, it does not address the serious animal health and welfare problems that make Kansas the #3 worst puppy mill state in the country.

The Division of Animal Health, Animal Facilities Inspection Program is not underfunded. Rather the Animal Facility Inspection program is inefficient and therefore, ineffective. Unlicensed and sub-standard licensees - puppy mills, demand significant time and resources from the inspection program. At the same time, these substandard facilities flood our communities with sick and un-socialized dogs and cats. The only way to improve the program and protect families and their animals is to strengthen the program's statutory responsibilities. The following changes are suggested.

- Inspection schedules should be written into the law with consequences for inspection failures. Also, inspections should be conducted without prior notice to the licensee.
- A fee should be assessed when a licensee fails an inspection. Any licensee that fails an inspection should also have to pay the costs for re-inspection, \$100 for the first re- inspection and \$200 for the second re-inspection. Licensees that fail a third inspection in 24 months should have their license revoked.

The legislature has the power to address the Kansas puppy mill problem. The first step to strengthen the Animal Facility Inspection Program by adopting new statutory requirements. Attached are specific amendments for your consideration.

I respectfully request that you adopt these amendments and pass HB 2097.

Sincerely,

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