



To: Chairman John Barker
Vice Chair Ron Highland
Members, Federal and State Affairs Committee

From: Terry Humphrey
Humane Society Legislative Fund of Kansas

Re: Support Passage of HB 2276

Date: March 22, 2017

I am Terry Humphrey with the Humane Society Legislative Fund of Kansas (HSLF KS). HSLF KS works to pass animal protection laws at the state and federal levels and to educate the public about animal protection issues. Thank you for the opportunity to speak about HB 2276 and the need to amend the Dangerous Regulated Animals Act.

On the morning of August 18, 2005, Michael Good received a phone call no parent should ever have to answer. His 17-year-old daughter, Haley, had been attacked and killed by a tiger in Mound Valley, Kansas. Haley was having her senior pictures taken at Lost Creek Animal Sanctuary, posing with what the business described as a “tame” 300-pound tiger. The tiger was on a chain held by the handler, but the animal lunged at Haley and clamped its jaws on her neck. She did not survive.

The following year, the Kansas Legislature did the right thing by restricting the possession of the following “dangerous regulated animals” in Kansas: Lions, tigers, leopards, jaguars, cheetahs and mountain lions, or any hybrid thereof; bears or any hybrid thereof; and all non-native, venomous snakes.

Today, nearly 12 years after Haley’s tragic death, we are asking Kansas lawmakers to add two more species to the list of dangerous regulated animals: non-human primates and wolves.

To be clear, HB 2276 deals with apes and monkeys, with monkeys being the most common non-human primates owned by private citizens. It does not include lemurs, such as those at Tanganyika Wildlife Park in Goddard, Kansas. Lemurs are not monkeys - they are prosimians. Moreover, HB 2276 does not propose taking away lawfully owned animals, but owners cannot replace them or acquire additional dangerous regulated animals.

Non-human primates, aka monkeys, are intelligent creatures well adapted for their native environments, but they do not make good pets. Even the smallest breeds are incredibly strong and can become aggressive, often attacking their owners and others. Many of you will recall the case of Charla Nash, the woman from Connecticut who was attacked by her friend's 200-lb. pet chimpanzee. The chimp destroyed Charla's face, basically ripping it off, and bit off her hands. She survived but had to have a face transplant, among other surgeries.

Charla also had her eyes removed because they were wounded and infected by the chimpanzee. In fact, infection and the spread of zoonotic diseases—infectious diseases that pass from animals to humans—is one of the primary safety concerns for those who have contact with non-human primates such as monkeys. More than a hundred zoonotic diseases have been identified in primates.¹ Non-human primates can spread deadly viral, bacterial, fungal and parasitic infections that pose serious health risks to humans, including tuberculosis, hepatitis A and B viruses, Herpes B, and poxviruses.²

It should come as no surprise that the American Veterinary Medical Association opposes the private ownership of non-human primates—including the using them as assistance or service animals—due to the potential injury and zoonotic risks they pose.³ Their concerns should serve as a warning for all of us.

In addition to non-human primates, HB 2276 proposes that wolves also be added to the list of dangerous regulated animals. Like monkeys, wolves are beautiful creatures that do not make good pets. They may look like dogs, but they are very different. As the US Fish and Wildlife Service explains:

It took many thousands of years for humans to selectively breed canines for the traits that make modern-day dogs such delightful companions: congeniality, flexibility, and eagerness to please. It is simply impossible to instill these traits in a wild animal overnight. Many an unsuspecting wolf lover

¹ Sarah Cleaveland, M.K. Laurenson, L.H. Taylor, "Diseases of humans and their domestic mammals: pathogen characteristics, host range and the risk of emergency," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences.*, 356 (1411), 991-999, 2001.

² Several Sources:

Gail Golab, PhD, DVM, Congressional Testimony of Dr. Gail Golab, Director of the Animal Welfare Division of the American Veterinary Medical Association, on the Captive Primate Safety Act, March 11, 2008, <<https://www.avma.org/News/PressRoom/Pages/Testimony-golab-080311.aspx>>.

David M. Renquist, D.V.M., M.A. and Robert A. Whitney, Jr., D.V.M., M.S., "Zoonoses Acquired From Pet Primates," *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice*, 17 (1) 219-240, 1987.

Stefanie Grethe, Jens-Ove Heckel, Wolfram Rietschel, Frank T. Huffert, "Molecular Epidemiology of Hepatitis B Virus Variants in Nonhuman Primates," *Journal of Virology*. 2000 Jun; p 538.

³ <https://www.avma.org/News/PressRoom/Pages/Testimony-golab-080311.aspx>

has purchased a wolf pup, only to find that it is largely untrainable (since it does not care much about pleasing its owner), and that as it grows into adulthood it becomes unpredictable, if not downright dangerous, especially around children and small animals.⁴

Unpredictable, untrainable, dangerous around small children and animals—these are not the words we associate with companion animals, or pets. It's time to add wolves to the list of dangerous regulated animals, too.

The tragic death of Haley and the brutal injuries suffered by Charla are two of the most dramatic illustrations of the harm that can result when so-called exotic “pets” come into contact with humans, but they are not the only reports of injuries. Nor do they acknowledge the countless first-responders who risk their safety when dangerous animals such as non-human primates and wolves escape into the community. However, they serve as powerful reminders of the dangers that may lurk in our communities and the need to put public safety first by strengthening the Dangerous Regulated Animals Act. Thank you.

⁴ <https://www.fws.gov/midwest/wolf/aboutwolves/nwf-hybrids.htm>