



To: House Fed & State Committee

From: Carla Lewis, President, Kansas Animal Control Association (KACA)

Date: March 22, 2017

RE: Support HB 2276

Chair Barker and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 2276. My name is Carla Lewis, I am an animal control officer and the president of the Ks. Animal Control Association. I am here today to express strong support for changes to the Kansas Dangerous Regulated Animal Act.

Every day law enforcement personnel, animal control officers and other first responders face grave dangers associated with protecting the citizens of Kansas. However, these brave men and women should not have to face something as extraordinary as an escaped wolf or a rampaging chimpanzee because weak laws allow these incredibly dangerous animals to be kept by unqualified individuals.

In 2011, a disturbed man in Ohio released dozens of tigers, lions, primates, and other animals before taking his own life. Considerable law enforcement resources were used and officers were put at grave risk to secure the area, caution motorists to stay in their vehicles, warn residents to remain indoors, and inform the community that the local schools were closed until further notice. Unfortunately, many of the animals had to be shot and killed by local law enforcement.

Almost all of the states that have bans in place for all exotics did so as a reactionary measure. Meaning, someone was horribly injured or died. Measures taken prior to an incident could have saved injuries, lives and monetary costs for law enforcement and municipalities. Kansas has a chance to be proactive.

One way to prevent a similar tragedy in Kansas is to enact sensible legislation that limits the possession of these animals to experienced, qualified, and professionally-run zoological facilities, such as those accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Dangerous predatory wild animals should not be accessible to the general public.

In addition to the obvious physical dangers from species such as tigers, lions, bears, and dangerous reptiles; primates present a unique threat because they can transmit numerous infectious diseases to humans and domestic animals.

Taxpayers, shelters, and accredited zoos and sanctuaries are shouldering the financial burden for irresponsible individuals who acquire these animals due to weak or non-existent regulations. Police, animal control, and other emergency personnel who are often stretched thin due to budgetary constraints are forced to expend limited resources when responding to dangerous incidents involving these very deadly predators.

We urge the Committee to expand the Ks. Dangerous Regulated Animal Act to include wolves and primates.

Please let me know if you should have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carla Lewis
Board President
Ks Animal Control Association
www.kaca.net