



January 20, 2022  
House Judicial Committee  
Re: HB 2364

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding HB 2364. My name is Midge Grinstead, and I am the Kansas State Director for the Humane Society of the United States and I support this bill.

As a director of a Kansas shelter for 15 years, I came across the issue of animals starving to death, many, many times. Under the current law, "failure to provide" is a misdemeanor. When people don't feed and water their animals consistently, it usually falls under this category and it's treated as neglect. It becomes an educational opportunity to teach the owner proper animal care.

Several times, I came upon situations where the person clearly intended to do the animal harm, but was told that because they failed to provide food it was a simple misdemeanor. Once such case was an individual with a dog that had been shared during a marriage. The person with custody of the dog would lie to the ex-spouse and say the dog was with the ex-roommate, and vice/versa. The dog was kenneled in the basement of the home without food or water. When the Dalmatian was found, it weighed in around 20 pounds. At its last veterinary visit, it weighed 61 pounds. The person was charged with a misdemeanor.

The second case was of a father taking care of his son's two dogs. The son was in Boston attending college. Although the father agreed to care for the dogs, he didn't. They were left in their kennels in a lower area of the house where the man would enter and exit every day, walking by them. When we found the dogs, I thought they were dead. It looked like just bones covered with skin laying in the kennels. When I went to remove one, it moved. Neither dog was able to be saved and were immediately euthanized by the veterinarian. The man was charged with a misdemeanor.

According to the FBI, "It has long been accepted among professionals that must assess dangerous populations that the best predictor of violence is past behavior, and a past history of violence is the single most predictor of future violence." Animal neglect and abuse can be linked to a vast majority of habitual violent offenders, children who kill and serial killers. The FBI has a national database that includes adjudicated animal cruelty cases, including neglect. Human and animal neglect and violence are connected.

It's important to look at these heinous cases to be able to charge individuals that perpetrate the crimes appropriately. The change in the law will help do that. Please support HB 2364.

I would be happy to answer any questions to the best of my ability.

Sincerely,

Midge Grinstead