



Northeast Kansas Animal Welfare Foundation

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Dear Kansas House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee,

Animal welfare organizations throughout our great state are working tirelessly to provide care and rehabilitation for pets in need. I have had the pleasure of working in this industry for 14 years and volunteered for several years prior to that. As Kansans, we take pride in the work that we do and that should be reflected in all sectors — including for-profit breeding operations and nonprofit pet adoption agencies. We should have high expectations for businesses tasked with caring for hundreds, sometimes thousands, of animals every year. I urge you to support HB 2542 as a way to modernize the Kansas Pet Animal Act and demand better care and accountability from pet facilities.

I have attended many meetings of the Pet Animal Advisory Board over the years. I appreciate the way key stakeholders such as breeders, shelters, and veterinarians all have a seat at the table. Those discussions are key in developing policies that help elevate our standards for care. However, rescue organizations also deserve a voice on the board. On the surface, rescues and shelters seem very similar but these are two different business models. Rescue organizations need representation on the board to help navigate the impact that policies and regulations have on their type of business structure.

One of the biggest animal welfare challenges I see facing organizations today is the need to provide shelter and medical care for pets that have been seized by law enforcement. At the Northeast Kansas Animal Welfare Foundation we have a small amount of funds set aside to assist organizations through our Cruelty Stoppers fund. It is quite evident that all of these funds could be depleted within just one week if we helped every organization in need in just our 25 county service area. When the Department of Agriculture seizes animals they expect shelters to provide sanctuary and veterinary care for them but they lack the ability to compensate these nonprofit animal shelters. I urge the Kansas Legislature to rectify this by giving the Department of Agriculture the budget necessary to reimburse nonprofits for their part in these cases. Otherwise, the Department will continue to put a strain on the budgets and mission of our local humane societies.

Support HB 2542 as a way to improve standards of care, give rescue organizations their fair representation, and give the Department of Agriculture the resources necessary for sheltering seized animals.

Sincerely,

**Justin L. Brokar, President & CEO
Northeast Kansas Animal Welfare Foundation**