

(Corrected) Testimony by Crystal Swann Blackdeer, **HB 2437, Proponent** March 22, 2023

Mr. Chair, Representative Moser, Representative Carlin, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Crystal Swann Blackdeer. I serve as Executive Director of the Leavenworth County Humane Society (first started in 1885) in Lansing.

I have been attending Pet Animal Advisory Board meetings for more than ten years. As a member of the public, I witnessed earlier review and revision meetings. I am aware of the amount of work that goes into recommending changes to the Act. But the Board advises the Department. The Board does not create nor write, nor approve the Act or changes to it.

Since 2021, I also serve on the Governor's Pet Animal Advisory Board representing Shelters and Rescues. Shelters are the largest single category of licensees (253). Rescues (52) do not have a seat on the Board. Combined Shelter & Recue licensees (291) outnumber the six five categories of breeders (278) who hold five seats on the Board.

I have been in attendance at two meetings of the Board since December 2022 where updates to the Pet Animal Act were discussed, and members of the Board freely spoke. We first discussed a list of proposals, then 23rs0517, and finally HB 2437.

Additionally, the Director of the Animal Facility Inspection Program sent out a copy of the bill requesting input from members on January 26, 2023. The Board members have had multiple opportunities to provide input to this bill. There have even been two special "emergency" meetings called by the Chair to discuss the issues. I believe the program has gone above and beyond to keep the Board informed and solicit our input.

The role of the Pet Animal Advisory Board is to advise, not dictate, approve or disapprove, or write changes to the Pet Animal Act.

The Department and the Program have every right and responsibility to propose legislation that empowers them to do their jobs properly, to ensure the health of Kansas pet animals, to equitably enforce standards, and to adjust to evolving standards of practice in pet animal care.

The updates in HB 2437 help the Program and all of the licensees under the program to improve and hold high the standards of the Kansas pet animal industry. I am sure we can all agree that is what we want.

I urge your support of HB 2437.

Crystal Swann Blackdeer (LTC, USArmy, Retired)  
Shelter Representative, Kansas Pet Animal Advisory Board  
Executive Director, Leavenworth County Humane Society, Inc. (still a volunteer!)  
100 W. Gilman Road, Lansing KS 66043 913-250-0506 [lvncohs@live.com](mailto:lvncohs@live.com)