

To those considering Senate Bill 117,

My name is Dr. Brad Crauer, Asst. Clinical Professor – Shelter Medicine, Kansas State University. I teach shelter medicine and management to veterinary students in an outreach/service based program that promotes best practice to organizations across Kansas and advises shelters nationwide. The purpose of this statement is to give my strongest support for Senate Bill 117 and ask that you give it your most serious consideration.

The landscape of animal sheltering has changed dramatically over the past 10-15 years. It was not long ago that “dog pounds” were only expected to hold companion animals for the minimum of three days. Today, due to the rapid evolution of public perspective, animal shelters are being asked to save any animal deemed to be treatable medically or behaviorally. This has resulted in pressures being put on animal shelter facilities, finances and manpower. It has also resulted in the need to update legislation at all levels to better address these challenges.

Nationwide and in Kansas the number of animal shelters with veterinarians on staff is becoming more and more commonplace. The level of medical and surgical practice in these animal shelters is on par with that of private practice. Unfortunately, the current statutes in Kansas handcuff shelter veterinarians from doing their best to provide humane care and save lives. Specifically, inhibiting movement of any known “contagious or infectious disease” is a hardship to veterinarians advising animal shelters. Similar conditions are routinely discharged to the public in private practice without regulation.

It is my opinion Senate Bill 117 fills two important needs. First, it updates outdated statutory language to specifically address animal shelters and recognize the unique environment they have become. Second, it separates that language from the current statutes which continue to work well for agriculture. If Senate Bill 117 were to pass it would ensure that the needs of companion animals in animal shelters could be addressed without putting those of agriculture at risk.

I support Senate Bill 117 and hope you give it your most serious consideration.

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