



POLICE DEPARTMENT

BUREAU OF OPERATIONS

ANIMAL SERVICES



Major Curtis Nicholson
Community Support Commander

Jennifer Stewart
Director

February 8, 2019

Sen. Dan Kerschen
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Judy.Marks@senate.ks.gov
VIA EMAIL

Chairman Kerschen and Members of the Committee,

I am Jennifer Stewart, Director of Kansas City, Kansas Animal Services, and we are in support of Senate Bill 117. We perform both field and sheltering services for Kansas City, Kansas and rural Wyandotte County. We are a division of the Unified Government of Kansas City, Kansas/Wyandotte County, operating under the Police Department. KCK Animal Services takes in approximately 2800 animals a year. Because our sheltering facility is 32 years old, we have no true isolation area for sick animals and use small areas of our shelter to prepare dogs and cats for spay and neuter surgeries and for truly vulnerable animals that come into our care like puppies and kittens. We do our best to prevent the spread of disease through cleaning and handling protocols, but the animals who come into our care often get sick simply because of the nature of our business.

KCK Animal Services cannot turn away an ill or injured animal, so the current statute that both prevents our officers from taking in a sick animal and keeping it where other animals are, and prevents the movement, fostering, or adoption of a sick animal (K.S.A. § 47-624(a)(2),(3),(4)) is antithetical to the purpose of our division of the Unified Government. If Animal Services cannot take in a sick cat from an animal abuse investigation, we cannot properly enforce our city code. Similarly, if we cannot keep a sick dog in the shelter where other animals may be exposed, like a stray dog coming in off the streets, we cannot serve the Kansas City community.

Like the other hundreds of municipal animal control agencies in the state, the current statute is problematic and would be incredibly costly, if not impossible to resolve. The only resolution other than changing this statute is to stop taking in sick animals or to immediately euthanize those animals who fall ill in our care. Neither option is in keeping with our mission to protect the health and safety of our residents, and to protect animals and promote their humane treatment, and is truly bad public policy.

The language changes and obligations of our agency outlined in SB 117 are practical and allow us to keep the public safe while also enhancing animal welfare in Kansas City, Kansas.

Please support SB 117.

Respectfully,
Jennifer Stewart
Director of Animal Services



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