



February 10, 2019

Members of the Senate Agriculture Committee,

The Lawrence Humane Society serves the Lawrence/Douglas County area by taking in animals that may be ill, injured, or homeless. We see over 4,500 animals a year from the City of Lawrence Animal Control and Douglas County Sheriffs Department, as well as from residents from our area. Our organization nurtures the human-animal bond by providing shelter, care, and advocacy for homeless and abused animals, as well as resources for the pets and people in our community. Achieving our mission means not turning any animal away because of illness or injury, and providing them with much needed medical care. Often the medical care needed for a sick dog or cat is to be treated in a home environment out of the stress of a shelter setting.

Best practices in animal sheltering and shelter veterinary medicine dictate that animals who are sick should be treated and swiftly moved out of the facility. This is done by moving dogs and cats to foster homes or finding adoptive families for them, which is prohibited under the current statutory language SB 117 amends. Keeping sick animals in the shelter has historically doubled the length of time they spend in our shelter and others in the state, which inhibits the treatment and ultimate prognosis of those animals. Prolonged time in a shelter costs shelter resources like staff time, supplies, space, and funds; some of which come from the local governments we serve.

Our organization knows first-hand how sick animals can impact overall shelter population from outdated air flow to poor kennel structure. The Lawrence Humane Society engaged subject matter experts to help us minimize disease exposure and maximize the medical treatment of animals in our shelter. Those national experts recommended we build a new shelter to better manage our animal population. Over the last two years, we have raised \$7.5 million on a new facility that is better structured for the intake of sick animals. While we are proud of our new facility, this is not something every one of the over 200 animal shelters in the state could embark on.

Like most animal shelters in Kansas, our organization has agreements in place to take animals from enforcement agencies, and as such, has no control over our animal population. The current prohibition on keeping animals where other animals may not have been exposed to an illness is unfeasible and impractical if we are to meet our contractual obligation. Further, the statute essentially dictates how we, as veterinarians, practice medicine for our patients. Without a statutory change, the treatment of animals in our care and our recommendations to move or transfer an animal will be hamstrung by this language.

Please support Senate Bill 117 as a much-needed change to this statute.

s/Dr. Luke Pickett, D.V.M., *Chief Veterinarian*
s/Dr. Jennifer Stone, D.V.M., *Staff Veterinarian*
s/Meghan Scheibe, *Interim Executive Director*

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