

Michigan HB 4663 – Koda’s Bill (Pound Seizure Bill) - Fact Sheet

- 1. This legislation will not prevent life saving biomedical research. For those facilities that still wish to utilize animals, this bill will allow animals to be obtained. For facilities utilizing alternative non-animal techniques, this bill does not impact that research.**

In a Congressional study from 2009, the Committee on Scientific and Humane Issues in the Use of Random Source Dogs and Cats for Research and the National Research Council found that random source animals from Class B dealers are not necessary for any federal research projects. If random source animals are needed, there are other avenues for obtaining them, as are outlined in this bill, including: (1) Class A dealers that breed animals for research, (2) individuals who donate their pets for research, and (3) research facilities with breeding programs. This bill also cuts out the Class B dealers “middlemen,” who have been investigated for acquiring random source animals from questionable sources and then sell them for experimentation. It also stops shelter animals from being used for experimentation, many of which are lost and/or abused pets, but still allows for certain veterinary training practices. Much of the conclusion of the Committee was based on the speculative practices and conditions of Class B dealer facilities. As a result of the Committee’s finding, the federal Pet Safety and Protection Act of 2009 (S. 1834 and H.R. 3907) was filed in October 2009 to prevent research facilities from accepting animals from Class B dealers.

- 2. In recent years, research and training facilities have moved away from live animal research toward simulated or in-vitro research techniques. An even greater number are choosing not to use shelter animals supplied by Class B dealers.**

According to a 2009 Congressional study, 0.03% of research animals are random source cats and dogs. A majority of cats and dogs used in research come from Class A dealers. According to the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, in 2008 the last U.S. medical school using live dogs for medical education ceased this practice. Currently, 151 of 158 U.S. medical schools do not use any live animals for education, and 202 of 211 surveyed programs in the U.S. and Canada do not use live animals for Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) courses. Every medical school and ATLS program *in Michigan* has ended live animal use for these purposes. In fact, in February 2009, the University of Michigan stopped the use of shelter dogs obtained from Class B dealers in its ATLS program. Of the 28 veterinary training schools in the U.S., twelve do not purchase random source animals from Class B dealers, and 22 schools offer alternatives to students. In 2010, Michigan State University Veterinary School stopped requiring terminal surgery labs using live animals. Many research and training institutions, including all Department of Defense programs and the intramural research program at National Institutes of Health have stopped using random source dogs and cats (pets commonly from animal shelters, found as strays, or other unverified sources). In 2008, following recommendations from the National Research Council of the Academy of Sciences, three national governmental agencies (Environmental Protection Agency, the National Toxicology Program and the National Institutes of Health) signed a memorandum of understanding to replace the use of animals with in vitro methods for chemical safety testing. In January 2010, the American Physiological Society endorsed the 2009 Congressional Random-Source Study calling for Class B dealers to no longer provide random source animals.

- 3. This bill will not increase the costs of purchasing non-random source animals for research.**

The cost of purchasing a Class B dealer cat or dog is less than a Class A bred animal because the B dealer animals are not “conditioned”, which means they do not receive full veterinary treatment before sale. However, the end-result costs may be higher since the B dealer animals “are not free from disease”, “they may need to undergo prolonged quarantine, socialization, treatment, or be removed from the study altogether”, and there are transport costs involved.

- 4. USDA has increased inspections of Class B dealers to include quarterly on-site inspections because they are deemed a “high risk” due to concerns about improper procurement of animals. These inspections include a “trace back” procedure that has verified some random source animals were improperly obtained. Illegality and abuse are so rampant among Class B random source animal dealers that the number of USDA-licensed dealers decreased through enforcement from 100 in 1993 to only 9 in 2010.**

A USDA director has confirmed that, “We use a risk-based inspection system (RBIS) to target our inspections. RBIS encourages frequent inspections at types of facilities that, in our experience, have more problems and fewer inspections at types of facilities with consistent compliance. Random Source Class B Dealers are considered high risk in RBIS and are inspected at least quarterly. We had 10 licensed Random Source Class B Dealers in FY2008 and conducted 74 inspections.” Six of the 9 licensed Random Source Class B Dealers have compliance issues that are under review.

As an example of the nature of the Class B random source animal business, a 2006 HBO documentary called *Dealing Dogs* exposed similar illegal actions of C.C. Baird, an Arkansas Class B Dealer. An undercover investigation by Last Chance for Animals revealed that stolen animals were found being brokered by C.C. Baird, a Class B Dealer whose facility was shut down after subsequent criminal prosecution. Over the five month investigation, footage revealed that Baird paid “bunchers” (people who collect animals) to steal family pets or fraudulently acquire dogs and cats from “free to good home” ads. Baird faced felony charges relating to money laundering and mail fraud, and was charged with hundreds of violations of the Animal Welfare Act. Responding to the need to eliminate such illegal activities of Class B Dealers, the USDA authorized a Standard Operating Procedure in 2008 to strengthen inspections.

There have been several examples where family pets, with identification tags, have been in the possession of two random source Class B dealers in Michigan. These include:

- In the Fall of 2008, a dog named Rusty was in the possession of a Michigan B dealer and had an identification tattoo. The dealer contacted the tattoo registry, but was uncooperative and gave a false name to the registry. The tattoo registry identified the caller as a Michigan B dealer through their caller id and located Rusty’s actual owner, who lived in Florida and reported that Rusty was stolen from his front yard in 2005. Rusty was eventually retrieved from the B dealer and is now safe.
- In 2005, an undercover investigation by Last Chance for Animals found that the rabies identification tags were removed from a dog named Conan and thrown away by the dealer who seized the dog from Jackson County Animal control. The family traced Conan to a New York laboratory where after an experiment he was killed. No one had contacted the family to retrieve Conan.
- In 2005, a dog named Echo was stolen from his yard in Fayetteville, AR and traveled through 5 states before ending up at a research facility in Minnesota. Echo was in the facilities of two Class B dealers (Michigan and Missouri) and neither scanned him for an identification chip. The research facility scanned Echo, located a microchip and returned Echo to his family.
- In 1993 a dog named Sam from Ionia County was improperly obtained from the county shelter and concealed from the owner by a Michigan B dealer. Through a police investigation, Sam was eventually returned to his owner. A lawsuit filed by Sam’s owners against a Michigan Class B dealer and others resulted in the Judge Enslin of the U.S. District Court – Western District of Michigan stating in an opinion. “According to the allegations, the [Michigan Class B dealer was] operating their business by paying the county animal shelter workers to illegally deprive pet owners of their pets by dispensing with the pets prior to the expiration of the legal holding period. Proof of these allegations’ truthfulness is found in the report of the State Department of Agriculture, the testimony of the plaintiffs that the shelter workers confirmed that their pets were immediately removed from the shelter, and the alleged admissions of [the dealer] to the effect that he was cooperating with [the shelter director] in covering up the goings-on at the shelter.” (Opinion, Defendants’ Motion for Summary Judgment, November 1, 1995)

5. The USDA currently has insufficient resources to properly regulate Class B dealers. The USDA admits it spends too much of its limited resources in an attempt to regulate 9 random source Class B dealers who re-sell dogs and cats for research.

In a meeting held in January 2009 at the National Academies of Science, a USDA representative stated that USDA has prioritized its focus on Class B dealers because of allegations and investigations into “improperly obtaining animals”, but a loophole in the Animal Welfare Act prevents them from doing the necessary job no matter how much money they have. He stated, “The oversight of random source dealers is the single most important thing USDA does based on public and Congressional expectations. Random source dealers have always been an issue over the years, even with declining numbers of dealers and animals involved.” Each year, the USDA admits “it is expensive” to regulate 9 random source Class B dealers, who are each inspected

in person more than four times yearly. But USDA oversees about 10,000 total licensees and registrants that are in need of inspection and oversight.

6. **This bill will not put Class B Dealers and research facilities out of business. Random source Class B dealers and research facilities will still be able to conduct business by legally obtaining dogs and cats from other non-random sources.**

Although this bill will prevent shelter animals, strays and other random source animals from being obtained for research, the bill still allows dealers to obtain animals from other sources, including other Class B dealers, licensed auctions, breeders, and people surrendering pets that they raised or bred.

7. **Pound seizure is contrary to the community expectation and purpose of an animal shelter. The National Animal Control Association and the Association of Shelter Veterinarians oppose the practice of pound seizure, as do all national animal welfare organizations.**

Seventeen states plus the District of Columbia have passed laws banning the practice. Michigan communities are outraged when they learn that their local shelter provides animals for experimentation. Although all but 2 Michigan shelters have banned pound seizure, this law is still needed to give Michigan communities a sense of security and trust in their local animal shelters. Given the economic difficulties facing Michigan families, thousands of pets are being surrendered to shelters. Their owners do so hoping that the pets will be adopted by people who are able to afford pet-care. However, many of these pets are now being utilized in experiments unbeknownst to their former owners. This is a betrayal of trust even in the best of economic times. Michigan law requires that citizens report stray dogs to county or city officials in order to be reunited with their family (MCL 287.308). It also encourages citizens to call in complaints of animal abuse or neglect so that the pets can be brought to the shelter for safe keeping. Yet people will not comply with those laws when they realize a shelter practices pound seizure.

In April 2009, American Humane conducted a survey on how people feel about pound seizure. Responses were received from 3044 individuals and responses included:

- “Would you bring a lost animal you’d found to a shelter that released unclaimed animals to research?” Over 97% of the people survey responded by saying “No.”
- “If there were a stray dog in your neighborhood, would you be LESS likely to report it to animal control if you knew it might end up in a research laboratory?” Over 91% of those surveyed answered “Yes.”
- “If you knew of an animal that was being abused or neglected, would you be LESS likely to report it to animal control if you knew it might end up in a research laboratory?” Almost 80% of those surveyed said “Yes”.
- “Would you donate money to an animal shelter that voluntarily sold or gave animals to laboratories?” Almost 98% of people surveyed said “No”.

8. **Shelter cats and dogs that are given to the Class B Dealer are not unwanted pets, but are healthy and adoptable pets. Moreover, people are not informed that their pet could be sent to research.**

Due to the recession, many people who love their pets are unable to care for them. People believe that an animal shelter is where you take your pet to find a new home. People may be informed that their pet could be euthanized, but they are *frequently not informed* that their pet could be used in experimental research. One Michigan dealer has stated, "I'm sorry, they may have been a pet at one time, but at the point [a dealer] becomes involved, they are an unwanted, unclaimed animal about to be euthanized." That statement is simply false. This attitude is particularly egregious in our current economic climate where people are being forced to make difficult decisions, one of which may be to reluctantly relinquish a beloved pet in the hopes of finding a new home. Shelter animals taken for research are former family pets that are the friendliest and most trusting because they are the easiest to handle during experiments. Taking these former family pets in this way angers communities and violates the growing body of research involving the human-animal bond. It also violates the purpose of an animal shelter to be a safe haven for animals.

9. **Although only 2 shelters currently practice pound seizure, a law is still needed to ban this practice in order to protect communities from the issue re-emerging, and to avoid the waste of community resources in efforts to ban pound seizure.**

It would be easy to believe that pound seizure is not a problem in Michigan and that, because so few shelters engage in this outdated practice, a law is not needed. However, passing Koda's Bill is vitally necessary to protect Michigan shelters and their communities. When pound seizure ends in a county, some dealers have attempted to seek new business in other shelters. Many of these unsuspecting shelters are in rural and economically challenged areas. Those shelters are ripe for a dealer to appear and offer assistance in the form of quid pro quo services in exchange for obtaining cats and dogs for free. However, when communities learn of this practice, they mobilize and advocate for their county commissioners to stop the practice. Several recent counties have endured community campaigns to end pound seizure lasting up to 2-3 years. This not only takes up valuable time and resources that should be dedicated to other county issues, it also takes a terrible personal toll on those involved. This bill would finally end these time-consuming campaigns and the waste of valuable community resources, and would prevent the threat of pound seizure from resurfacing each time new commissioners are elected or a new shelter director is hired.

10. **None of the shelters practicing pound seizure utilize the Michigan law that allows a maximum \$10 fee for each cat and dog sold into research. So pound seizure does not provide an economic incentive to those communities and ending pound seizure does not result in a financial burden.**

Of the two Michigan shelters that currently engage in pound seizure, both give cats and dogs **for free** to Class B Dealers. Both of the shelters engage in a quid pro quo agreement with the dealer where the dealer provides other "free" services to the shelter (such as dead animal body removal) in exchange for having his pick of the shelter dogs and cats for research. This practice breeds concern about whether the shelter will give preference to the dealer over an adoption or rescue of the pet. Such scenarios have been documented in several former pound seizure shelters in Michigan. Removing pound seizure in a shelter often results in more community support, as recently seen in Osceola County, to make up for any "free" services from the dealer. Moreover, none of the shelters utilize the Michigan law (MCL 287.389) that allows a shelter to charge up to \$10 for each cat and dog sold to a dealer or research facility. Nonetheless, charging a fee would not bring a notable benefit to an economically challenged shelter. According to records from the Michigan Department of Agriculture, there has been a significant decline in the past 5 years of shelter animals that have been given to Class B Dealers. In 2004, animal shelters gave 2344 cats and dogs to Class B dealers whereas in 2008 the number decreased to 721 shelter cats and dogs. Thus, at the \$10 per pet limit, the maximum that could have been earned statewide in 2008 was \$7,210. That amount is negligible and not worth the negative cost to society in maintaining pound seizure.

11. **This bill will not place extra regulatory duties on Michigan Department of Agriculture.**

The oversight of Class B dealers is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, not the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Currently, there is no state regulation required for pound seizure. The only regulation that is needed is to continue to have shelters report their annual statistics and maintain the entry for whether pets are "sold" which means that they were given to a Class B dealer.

For more information, please contact:

American Humane Association

Office of Public Policy

Alexandria, VA

(703) 836-7387

publicpolicy@americanhumane.org

David Mead - My support for HB 4663-please share my statement of support for HB 4663 with committee members

From: Adrienne <cpht79@yahoo.com>
To: <dmead@house.mi.gov>
Date: 4/21/2010 11:43 AM
Subject: My support for HB 4663-please share my statement of support for HB 4663 with committee members

Dear Committee Clerk David Mead,

Please share with the committee members my support of HB 4663 today as it is a bill I strongly support. Since moving to Michigan from Florida, I've learned of pound seizure first hand through my time volunteering with a local rescue here. It appalled me that animals who could be given great homes were going to places to be destroyed. I understand the need for research, and as cancer has affected family and friends I want a cure, but I believe pound seizure is not the way. Class A dealers raise animals without socialization for that purpose. They've never had a home, been petted, walked, or slept in a bed with their best friend. They've never played catch, chased a catnip mouse, stalked shadows, or protected someone from the door bell. Class B dealers pull animals who could be adopted and find their "forever homes" not only letting the animal live longer but bringing money back into the shelter. More money than the Class B dealer provides. In some counties we pay the dealers to take animals that they put to sleep. Other counties allow the dealers to pay less to take animals than prospective families or even rescues. Some give the dealers first choice of adoptable animals to these dealers when rescues could easily find them homes. Putting an end to pound seizure would also end pets who were lost winding up in research as it happened at the University of Michigan. R&R Research of Howard City sold them a dog that had been lost with a microchip in it. They found the microchip, but it was too late. Don't let mistakes like that happen again.. not when the universities have tools like the Bionic Man. Thank you for your time.

Adrienne Spears
Jenison, MI

Testimony by Frances M. Schuleit, RN, MM
Before the Michigan House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture
In support of HB 4663 – Koda’s Bill
April 21, 2010

Good afternoon, Chairman Huckleberry, members of the Michigan House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture. My name is Frances Schuleit, and I am a resident of the state of Michigan, and a registered nurse with experience in large academic teaching hospitals. I spent the last 20 years of my nursing career with the national healthcare accrediting body, the Joint Commission. I have spent the last two years working actively with Montcalm County commissioners on improving animal welfare and the elimination of pound seizure in our county.

I come before you today not as an expert in animal control, not as an expert in medical research or health care, not as an expert in accreditation. I come to you as a citizen and businesswoman who believes that the appropriate policies and relationships must be in place for any system to work properly. Following is my testimony in support of House Bill 4663, also known as Koda’s Bill, to ban pound seizure in Michigan.

Pound seizure, or the release of companion animals for research purposes, severely impedes the relationship between the citizens of Michigan and our governmental agencies. The practice has eroded public confidence where pound seizure exists, not only in animal control facilities, but in the elected and other public officials who have authorized it in the past. This is particularly true in Montcalm County, where my husband and I have made our home for the past 17 years. Additionally, we have seen a rise in animal abandonment and stray animal populations in West Michigan. The economic downturn has imposed numerous challenges, while short staffed animal control officers respond to increasing requests for stray pick-ups.

Many county officials, staff, and volunteer committee members have spent inordinate amounts of time on the issue of pound seizure, taking away from their primary responsibilities. For nearly thirty years, private citizens and animal activists have cried out to public officials about the practice of pound seizure, attending meetings of the Board of Commissioners, Law Enforcement and Courts Committee, Finance and Personnel Committee, and others. Literally thousands of hours have been taken up by this issue, and this can be verified in the minutes of the respective committees. As a citizen of Montcalm County, I would like my commissioners to spend time on all of the issues affecting our county’s citizens. If pound seizure had been banned years ago, all of this valuable time might have been spent on planning for economic growth and development, rather than backpedaling during challenging times.

The campaign to end pound seizure escalated in the months preceding the 2009 expiration date of Montcalm County’s contract with a Class B dealer. The January 2009 meeting brought a crowd of over 150 concerned citizens, and over 2 hours of public comments. An Ad Hoc Committee was convened by the Montcalm County Board of Commissioners, and appointed by the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, Patrick Q. Carr. The Panel was comprised of 9 volunteer members from across the county, including two veterinarians, two commissioners, the President of Howard City, the owner of R and R Research, one rescue group volunteer, the animal control director, and one at-large citizen (myself). The Panel was charged with conducting the research necessary to formulate a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners on whether or not to continue a contract with a Class B dealer. The animal control director

stated in a public forum that she did not believe that there was any reason for contracting with a Class B dealer, and that she was not in favor of continuing such an arrangement. In an effort to learn more about the operations of the Class B dealer, committee members asked a number of questions. To many of the questions, the dealer responded “no comment,” or “I take the fifth.” Our Committee met biweekly for four months to research and analyze the information leading to our recommendation to terminate pound seizure. In addition, a subcommittee for policy development was convened, requiring preparation and participation in three separate meetings by four individuals.

A key component of the research done by the Ad-Hoc Committee was the set of findings and recommendations provided as the result of an operational assessment that was performed at no cost by three experts from the Humane Society of Kent County, with Dr. Wendy Swift leading the team. Following review of a 130+ page report of findings and recommendations that was provided to the committee, along with volumes of data provided by Animal Control, the Ad-Hoc Committee met together with the Montcalm County Board of Commissioners on April 27, 2009. The Ad-Hoc Committee submitted an extensive implementation plan, reported its conclusion that a contract with a Class B dealer was not necessary, and recommended that it be terminated immediately. The Board of Commissioners did not vote to terminate the contract immediately; however, in an effort to be fair to the Class B dealer, the Board decided to NOT RENEW the contract once it expired, effective August 1, 2009. Board members also expressed concern about the numerous USDA violations committed by the contractor that had recently come to their attention.

In July 2009, the Board of Commissioners appointed the Montcalm County Animal Control Advisory Board, of which I am the chairman. The initial monthly meeting took place August 3. We have had to start from square one in terms of reversing the poor public image while instituting policies and procedures that should have been in place for years. We continue to face many challenges. Citizens become concerned, to say the least, when they see the owner of the Class B dealer chatting with staff in the back office, even though there is no apparent business being transacted. They wonder what possible reason there could be for anyone to be in the back office other than staff members or people with official business.

Generally, operations have improved since pound seizure has been discontinued. Numerous organizations have assisted us with our research and in developing operational protocols. At one point the Board of Commissioners asked us to evaluate the feasibility of privatizing shelter services. Several leadership and Board members from the Humane Society of Kent County took time from their busy schedules to meet with us for a brainstorming session.

Neighboring counties which have eliminated pound seizure have allowed us to visit and have shared their resources with us. We have found that making positive change is much easier now, and readily accepted by the staff and Commissioners. Among the improvements that have been instituted since pound seizure has been discontinued are:

- Training for staff on euthanasia by injection
- Development and Implementation of Veterinary Plan for Disease Management, including vaccination and parasite control
- Development of initial set of comprehensive policies and procedures
- Lost and Found program in place using volunteers to take and post photos on internet website
- Partnership with Spay Neuter Program

- Development of volunteer program framework
- Community Outreach programs and activities in initial stage of discussion
- Initial Fund Raising discussions
- Initial discussions regarding Customer Service
- Rabies prevention clinics
- Growth of partnerships with rescue groups
- Improved public support
- Improved signage
- Customer friendly hours of operation
- Carcass disposal by cremation service
- Minor facilities improvements and ventilation

The law says that the Class B animal dealer is a USDA-licensed agent allowed to purchase and collect animals from random sources—such as "pounds," shelters, auctions, flea markets, and private individuals—and sell them to laboratories, institutions, and other dealers for research, testing, and education. Unless the animals come from pounds or shelters, the Class B dealer is obligated by law to buy animals from individuals who breed and raise the animals on their own properties, or from other dealers who can provide paperwork showing that the animals originated from such a source.

USDA inspection reports show that it doesn't necessarily work like that, though. Over the years, reports show that Class B dealers have been caught receiving stolen animals or fraudulently obtaining animals, including pets, and falsifying records to make the transactions appear to be in compliance with USDA regulations. For three decades, there has been public outcry to our government officials to end this practice of sending people's pets to research. In many cases, the animals were traceable to their original owners. The people have spoken loudly and bluntly, expressing that they do not want animal control to function in this manner.

Even though there are only two counties remaining in Michigan who practice pound release to Class B dealers, this legislation is important in order to bring our state up to current national standards. We have state of the art legislation in other areas, yet we continue to allow the practice of sending people's pets to certain inhumane death. Historically, the number of Class B dealers has shown a downward trend.

I, like so many others, believe that there should be none. Animals should not have to suffer the indignity, pain, and inhumane treatment that has been widely reported and documented in the attachments to Dr. Phillips' testimony. To continue the practice of pound seizure anywhere will continue to fracture the spirit of the people of Michigan. It is time to bring Michigan law up to date, and discontinue the antiquated practice of pound seizure.

I ask you to pass House Bill 4663, Koda's Law, to make Michigan more humane, for all of its residents. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Frances M. Schuleit

Frances M. Schuleit
 441 East Baldwin Lake Drive
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Testimony by Ronald C. Blanding, Montcalm County Commissioner, District 1

Before the Michigan House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture

In support of HB 4663 – Koda's Bill

April 21, 2010

Representative Huckleberry, Members of the Michigan House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture, good afternoon. I am Ronald Blanding, a lifelong resident and business owner residing in Montcalm County in Michigan. I have served in a number of public service roles, including City Council, Mayor, and City Planning Commission, and numerous other public service and voluntary leadership roles. In 2008, I was elected to a two year term as Montcalm County Commissioner for District 1.

The county board of commissioners is the chief policy making and legislative body of the county government, but is also involved in some administrative activities. As such, it serves as the "gatekeeper" of many county activities. The board also serves in an oversight function-inquiring into the affairs of county agencies, assessing their performance, and through the adoption of resolutions, providing new policy direction or assistance in solving problems.

Since I took office in January 2009, nearly every meeting of the Board of Commissioners and its subcommittees dealt with, in some fashion, the issue of pound seizure. Extensive amounts of time and attention have been devoted to resolving the issue of whether or not a contract with any Class B dealer is even warranted. This is not a new issue; the public has been attending Commissioner meetings to express concerns about pound seizure for over 20 years.

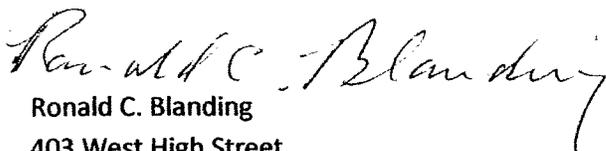
When I took office, Montcalm County was one of only three counties in the state that still permitted pound seizure. Coincidentally, the contract between Montcalm County and a Class B dealer was about to come up for renewal.

Before making a final decision, our Board decided to appoint an ad-hoc committee to study animal control operations, and to come up with a recommendation regarding whether or not to extend the contract. The Ad-Hoc Committee provided extensive information in its report, including a full assessment of animal control operations by the Humane Society. The most impactful recommendation was to terminate the release of animals to a Class B dealer. The contract ended officially on August 1, 2009. Over 150 people attended the meeting, including the local newspapers and television stations, to be present for the historic ending of the contract.

Animal control operations still have a long way to go, but they are substantially streamlined since August. Now is not the time to preserve the status quo. It's time for Michigan to ban Class B dealers. It's time for some fresh new ideas in government. It's time to hear what the public has been saying for decades.

Thank you for your attention to this important Bill. I urge you to pass House Bill 4663.

Sincerely,



Ronald C. Blanding
403 West High Street
Greenville, MI 48838

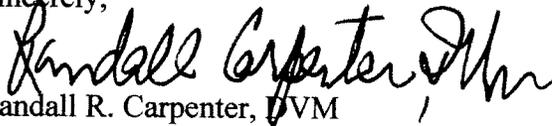
(616) 224-7972

To whom it may concern,

Please accept this letter of support for HB4663. The practice of pound seizure is an antiquated practice which is no longer necessary. This process, over the years, has been peppered with USDA violations, allegations of inhumane treatment of companion animals and murky dealings. The time to stop this practice is now.

As a member of the veterinary profession for over 35 years I have seen first hand how pound seizure and class B animal dealers can adversely affect a community. Please give this important bill your serious consideration. Your support will be an important step in correcting a sad, unnecessary and often inhumane practice.

Sincerely,



Randall R. Carpenter, DVM

Member American Veterinary Medical Association
Member Michigan Veterinary Medical Association
Member Western Michigan Veterinary Medical Assoc.
Member Small Animal Academy of West Michigan
Member Blue Ribbon Animal Control Committee
Member Montcalm Co. Animal Control Advisory Bd.

David Mead - Support for HB 4663

From: Bob Silva <silvar@msu.edu>
To: <dmead@house.mi.gov>, <Nmedina@house.mi.gov>, <MikeHuckleberry@house.mi.gov>
Date: 4/21/2010 8:43 AM
Subject: Support for HB 4663

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide a scientific perspective on the use of random source animals from animal shelters for research purposes. There are many world-class research institutes in this and other countries that do not obtain their animals from animal shelters. They have been performing cutting edge research and almost certainly will continue with state of the art biomedical research, without using animals from shelters. It is an utter fallacy that medical research would in any way be adversely affected by banning the use of animal shelter dogs and cats.

I have been actively engaged in research for over 30 years working with animals and infectious diseases. I know from experience that it is 'bad research' to use random bred animals. Class B animals are random-bred animals and each animal will respond differently in an experimental setting. Random-bred or Class B animals' response to a treatment is likely to be so varied that it is quite probable it would be impossible to determine which treatment was effective and which treatment was a failure. The best way to reduce this unknown is to use the 'same' (genetically similar as would be obtained from Class 'A' dealers) animals. This is impossible to do with random source animals taken from shelters.

In conclusion, the issue is not whether animal research benefits human health, but whether banning the sales of random source dogs and cats from animal shelters, will adversely affect research. My point is that not only will research not suffer from such a ban, but the quality of research may actually increase.

I urge you, in the interest of promoting quality medical research, to support a permanent ban on the sales of random source animals for research.

Robert F. Silva, M.S., Ph.D.
Senior Research Scientist
(517) 337-6833



7373 West Saginaw Highway, Box 30960, Lansing, Michigan 48909-8460
Phone (517) 323-7000

April 21, 2010

To: House Agriculture Committee

From: Tonia Ritter, State Governmental Affairs Manager

Re: Michigan Farm Bureau's statement on H.B. 4663

Today you are considering H.B. 4663, a bill that would effectively eliminate the use of random-sourced dogs and cats in research. While we understand the concerns of someone's pet that given up for potential adoption at an animal shelter resulting in the use of that animal for research, we have great concerns about the elimination of random-sourced dogs and cats altogether. A vigilantly monitored system for using random-sourced dogs and cats in research can contribute greatly to the health of people's pets and humans.

Michigan Farm Bureau members have supported the following policy statement consistently:
"Animal research is necessary to ensure more effective human and veterinary medical practices. Therefore, we oppose legislation which prohibits or unduly restricts the use of animals in research. If this practice were to be forbidden, research into prevention and treatment of many diseases, including cancer, would be greatly hindered. We are concerned about the potential elimination of "real" animals in the teaching and training process at our educational institutions and oppose any attempts to eliminate them."

While we appreciate the bill considers the use of random-sourced cats and dogs for blood-banking, life-saving surgery teaching and spay and neuter teaching, this bill will still eliminate the use of animals that would otherwise likely be euthanized, for research that might further help humans to better understand animal and human health and welfare issues. Michigan Farm Bureau would agree that appropriate safeguards should be in place to assure a pet owner who chooses to give his or her dog or cat to a shelter or pound has full knowledge and opportunity to decide their animals' future. Such solutions might include signage at the shelter indicating animals might be used in research and/or requirement of a signature indicating that the former pet owner acknowledges that the animal given to the shelter could be humanely used for research, testing and education.

Michigan Farm Bureau would support legislation that considers the input of American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and Michigan Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA) and their position regarding the use of random-source dogs and cats for research, teaching and education.

An excerpt from ActivistCash.com regarding HSUS:

"Despite the words "humane society" on its letterhead, **the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is not affiliated with your local animal shelter.** Despite the omnipresent dogs and cats in its fundraising materials, it's not an organization that runs spay/neuter programs or takes in stray, neglected, and abused pets. And despite the common image of animal protection agencies as cash-strapped organizations dedicated to animal *welfare*, HSUS has become the wealthiest animal *rights* organization on earth.

HSUS is big, rich, and powerful, a "humane society" in name only. **And while most local animal shelters are under-funded and unsung, HSUS has accumulated \$113 million in assets** and built a recognizable brand by capitalizing on the confusion its very name provokes. This misdirection results in an irony of which most animal lovers are unaware: **HSUS raises enough money to finance animal shelters in every single state, with money to spare, yet it doesn't operate a single one anywhere.**

Instead, **HSUS spends millions on programs that seek to economically cripple meat and dairy producers;** eliminate the use of animals in biomedical research labs; phase out pet breeding, zoos, and circus animal acts; and demonize hunters as crazed lunatics. HSUS spends \$2 million each year on travel expenses alone, just keeping its multi-national agenda going.

HSUS president **Wayne Pacelle described some of his goals** in 2004 for *The Washington Post*: "We will see the **end of wild animals in circus acts** ... [and we're] phasing out animals used in research. **Hunting? I think you will see a steady decline** in numbers." More recently, in a June 2005 interview, Pacelle told *Satya* magazine that HSUS is working on "a guide to vegetarian eating, to really make the case for it." A strict vegan himself, **Pacelle added: "Reducing meat consumption can be a tremendous benefit to animals."**

Shortly after Pacelle joined HSUS in 1994, he told *Animal People* (an inside-the-movement watchdog newspaper) that his goal was to build "a National Rifle Association of the animal rights movement." And now, as the organization's leader, he's in a position to back up his rhetoric with action. **In 2005 Pacelle announced the formation of a new "Animal Protection Litigation Section" within HSUS,** dedicated to "the process of researching, preparing, and prosecuting animal protection lawsuits in state and federal court."

HSUS's current goals have little to do with animal shelters. **The group has taken aim at the traditional morning meal of bacon and eggs with a tasteless "Breakfast of Cruelty" campaign.** Its newspaper op-eds demand that consumers "**help make this a more humane world [by] reducing our consumption of meat and egg products.**" Since its inception, HSUS has tried to limit the choices of American consumers, opposing dog breeding, conventional livestock and poultry farming, rodeos, circuses, horse racing, marine aquariums, and fur trapping. "

An excerpt from Center for Consumer Freedom.com's "7 Things You Didn't Know about HSUS":

1. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is a "humane society" in name only. It isn't affiliated with any hands-on "humane society" organizations and it doesn't operate a single pet shelter or pet adoption facility anywhere. **During 2008, HSUS contributed barely \$450,000 - less than one-half of one percent of its budget - in grants to dog and cat shelters.** By comparison, that same year it gave \$2.25 million to a political campaign committee behind an anti-meat ballot initiative in California, and put \$2.5 million in HSUS's executive pension plan. HSUS is the wealthiest animal-rights lobbying organization on earth.

