KALAMAZOO COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

May 31, 2012

Senator Joseph Hune
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536
SenJHune@senate.michigan.gov

Re: Support SB 423/SB 424, "Grant's Bills"

Dear Senator Hune,

The Kalamazoo Humane Society respectfully asks that you schedule a hearing for, and that you give your support to SB 423 and SB 424, known as "Grant's Bills" to require humane euthanasia in all Michigan animal shelters.

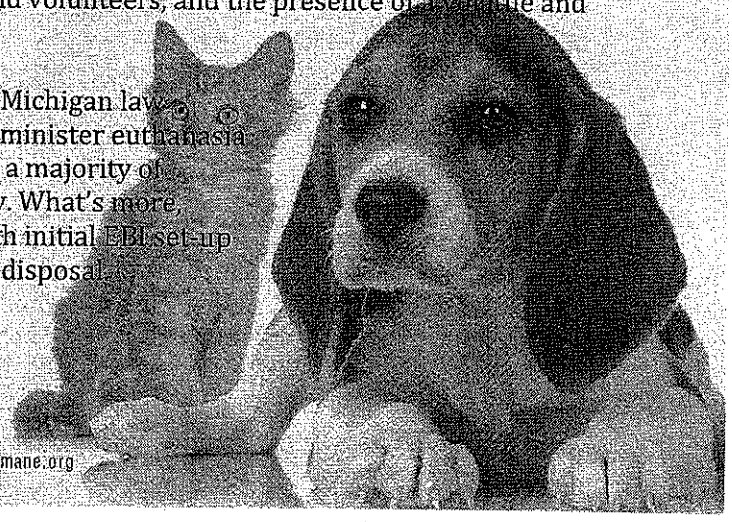
Named for a friendly dog who was killed in the St. Joseph County Animal Control shelter gas chamber in 2008, "Grant's Bills" would require that all Michigan shelters and Class B random source dealers euthanize cats and dogs only via an injection of sodium pentobarbital (referred to as EBI, for euthanasia by injection). EBI is accepted by all national veterinary and humane organizations as the most humane method currently available for euthanasia. When performed properly by trained personnel, EBI is painless to the animal, and begins to take effect within seconds.

Gas chambers are ineffective and inefficient, and can't be humanely used for the majority of animals that require euthanasia, including the old, very young, sick, pregnant, or injured. Even under the best of circumstances, animals can only be gassed one at a time, and the 25 or more minutes it can take to end that animal's life can be agonizing. At least one Michigan shelter has indicated that sometimes more than one animal is put into the chamber.

Gas chambers are more expensive. Recent studies have proven that EBI, including the costs of permitting and acquiring euthanasia drugs, actually costs less than using a gas chamber. In this economy, it goes without saying that Michigan shelters should be utilizing the most cost-effective measures available.

Gas chambers also pose a danger to shelter staff. Carbon monoxide is highly toxic and is one of the leading causes of accidental poisoning in the U.S. Shelter workers have been injured and even killed by malfunctioning gas chambers. As animal shelter administrators, we endeavor to provide the safest work environment possible for our staff and volunteers, and the presence of a volatile and toxic gas chamber would simply be unthinkable.

Training and funding for EBI is readily available. Michigan law permits trained shelter technicians to directly administer euthanasia drugs without supervision by a veterinarian, and a majority of shelters are licensed to receive EBI drugs directly. What's more, grants are available to help Michigan shelters with initial EBI set-up and training, and with gas chamber buyback and disposal.



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When euthanasia is necessary, the least we can do is to provide them some compassion in their last few moments of life. Indeed, for some animals, that comforting touch at the end may be the only act of kindness and mercy they have ever known.

Michigan's sheltering, rescue, and animal care professionals agree: the homeless pets of our state deserve the best care possible, including a humane and painless euthanasia. On behalf of homeless pets in Kalamazoo County and across our state, we ask that you please schedule a hearing for SB 423 and SB 424 and vote in their favor.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

The Kalamazoo Humane Society

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