



UNITED KENNEL CLUB  
Your Total Dog Registry Since 1898

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June 5, 2013

Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Sara Chisnell-Voigt, Legal Counsel for United Kennel Club, the nation's largest performance dog registry founded and based here in the state of Michigan. I am submitting testimony on behalf of UKC and concerned UKC dog owners regarding HB 4534 and HB 4535. Established in 1898, the United Kennel Club is the largest all-breed performance-dog registry in the world, registering dogs from all 50 states and 25 foreign countries. UKC prides itself on its family-oriented, friendly, educational events. More than 60 percent of its 16,000 annually licensed events are tests of hunting ability, training, and instinct.

UKC commends the idea and intent behind an animal abuse registry. UKC abhors any and all forms of animal abuse; in fact, we have a zero tolerance policy and any dog owner found guilty of a crime involving dogs is automatically barred from UKC indefinitely. However, we have some concerns with the bills in their current form that we would like to see addressed before they progress further. UKC would like further evidence that this law is warranted. Such a registry may not be justified due not only to the low number of convictions in Michigan but also the funding required to create and maintain. A solid showing of support from the law enforcement community for this registry should be demonstrated before further consideration. Potential cost and impact on adoption rates of animals must also be thoroughly examined

Access to the confidential database portion of the registry is over-inclusive in the current wording of the bills. The non-public portion of the database that contains confidential information should only be available to law enforcement and others within the judicial system who have been properly vetted and trained on handling confidential information. It's improper to allow unknown shelter and rescue volunteers access to private information. Also of concern is some wording throughout the bills—"animal placement services" and "animal placement agencies"—as our state has none of these services or agencies. Finally, inclusion of offenses "substantially similar" from other states may be overbroad and raise some notice concerns due to vagueness.

If further evidence can be given to demonstrate that an animal abuse registry is not only warranted but can have a positive impact for protecting animals, and our outlined concerns are addressed by amending these bills, United Kennel Club could potentially support these bills.

Sincerely,

Sara Chisnell-Voigt  
Legal Counsel  
UNITED KENNEL CLUB