



January 19, 2016

**To: Members of the Ohio House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee**

**From: John Leutz, Legislative Counsel**

**RE: Support for House Bill 278 – update of humane society law**

Chairman Brown, Ranking Minority Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 278 sponsored by Representative Hambley.

CCAO particularly supports the provision of the bill which repeals ORC Section 2931.18. This code section currently authorizes humane societies to employ attorneys who are given independent authority to prosecute certain violations of law dealing with cruelty to animals or children. This provision, in essence, allows a non-profit agency, whose board members are not subject to elected official oversight, to prosecute animal cruelty cases without county or municipal prosecutor oversight.

CCAO has long supported the repeal of this provision because we believe that the prosecution of any criminal offense ought to be subject to the supervision and discretion of the county prosecutor or municipal prosecuting authority. We believe that such procedure insures public accountability and proper governmental oversight.

CCAO also wishes to express its concern with the significant increase in the minimum monthly salary of a humane society agent which is to be paid by the county. We recognize that the current amount of \$25 has not been increased for some time, but believe that an immediate increase to \$150 is excessive, especially when the bill also provides for future increases every 5 years.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation and I would now answer any questions you may have.



County Risk  
Sharing Authority

Fax: 614-220-0209  
www.corsa.org



Counties Uniting for Affordable Health Benefits

Fax: 614-229-4588  
www.cebco.org



County Commissioners  
Association of Ohio  
Service Corporation

Fax: 614-221-6986  
www.ccao.org