

Senate Agriculture Committee

From: Steve Garner <stvgarner@charter.net>
Sent: Friday, September 30, 2016 8:26 PM
To: Senate Agriculture Committee
Subject: PCHTSC

Good Evening,

First and foremost, I would like to thank you for your time and efforts on behalf of animal welfare. Just recently I was made aware of this committee and the work it is doing. I am grateful to you.

Last year my family started volunteering at the Concerned Citizens for Animals shelter in Simpsonville. Working with the animals there, our eyes were opened as to the how difficult the task is of ensuring these sweet dogs and cats were well taken care of and socialized. And how limited the resources are. The volunteers and our sole caretaker seek to do all they can to care for the animals until we can find them forever homes. Unfortunately, some of the animals there come to us so damaged by human cruelty that they are unadoptable. All we can do is take care of their needs and show them continuous kindness.

As a state, our ranking of #44 in the nation for animal welfare is deplorable. While we have some good laws on the books, our judicial system needs to enforce them unequivocally. The animal is not "just a dog" or "just a cat" or "just an animal". They are sentient beings with emotions and feel hurt and pain as humans do. Shelter funding should be equally available across all counties in South Carolina. Some counties have great resources and others receive very little. I feel very strongly about spaying and neutering of animals. I am not sure how one would go about enacting this, but perhaps a tax owners must pay on animals who have not been fixed. There is a myriad of other issues I could list, however, these are the ones closest to my heart.

Thank you again for taking your time to meet every two weeks to discuss the issues and determine what course our state should take in the humane treatment of animals. And yes, my two cats and one dog are rescue babies.

Respectfully,

Terry Garner
Greenville, SC

Senate Agriculture Committee

From: Donna Wade <dcwade@charter.net>
Sent: Saturday, October 01, 2016 4:44 PM
To: Senate Agriculture Committee
Subject: PCHTSC

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my concern about the welfare of companion animals in the State of SC. While my full time job keeps me from being able to travel to Columbia to personally voice my concerns, I hope that hearing from people like me will help the animals.

I am a pediatric nurse practitioner in Greenville SC. I spend much of my free time fostering animals from the Greenville County shelter where they often get sick and are at risk of being killed. These poor animals have been abandoned or let down by humans who were supposed to be caring for them. I spend most of my disposable income caring for them or helping rescue groups who save their lives and commit to finding them a home where they will be cherished family members.

There are many other things that could be done to help this situation. One thing would be to ensure that low cost veterinary services can continue to be provided for animals in need. Another would be to ban the sale of puppies from backyard breeders at jockey lots and flea markets. Dog breeders should be required to have a license and this should be enforced to discourage these irresponsible backyard breeders. Throw the puppy mill and dog fighting low life behind bars. Animals should not suffer to provide income to criminals. Crimes against companion animals should be prosecuted to the fullest extent. In Ohio, Goddards Law was recently passed to make animal cruelty a felony. We need this type of legislation in SC.

I respectfully plea that we all work together to improve the plight of companion animals in the state of SC.

Sincerely,

Donna C Wade
Taylors SC
Sent from my iPad

Senate Agriculture Committee

From: Rachel Elger <elger.rachel@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 03, 2016 2:37 PM
To: Senate Agriculture Committee
Subject: PCHTSC

Dear Committee Members,

Animal welfare must become a higher priority in South Carolina.

I support :

- strict enforcement of CURRENT laws for animal abuse
 - this also means requiring the institutions, such as courts and magistrates, to enforce them
- writing the laws in a way that the average person can understand them, and publish them in places that are easily accessible.
- STRONGER laws against animal abuse
 - including chaining/tethering of animals
 - including abandonment of animals - when people move and leave an animal behind, there should be an investigation to find the persons responsible and charge them with a crime
 - better definitions for each type of abuse
 - including neglect - leaving an animal with water and shade should not be the only criteria, especially in the south where it is extremely hot
- STRONGER laws against dog fighting and cock-fighting AND PUPPY-MILLS, including selling of animals at flea markets and in parking lots
- CROSS-REPORTING of animal cruelty between state, county and city organizations, and also to include the FBI's national database
- the continuing effort to save animals lives by sending them from full and/or kill-shelters to other shelters, including out of state rescues
- having Animal control officers, law enforcement personnel, prosecutors and judges go through standardized animal cruelty training
 - preserve evidence at the scene
 - When animal is found dead under suspicious circumstances authorities should conduct a necropsy in the same way an autopsy is done on victims of homicide
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- changing the law to recognize animals as sentient beings instead of property
- required counseling for animal abusers. It is my opinion that those who abuse animals are more likely to abuse people or commit other crimes.
- shelter OVERSIGHT AND REGULATIONS, so all can be working from the same guidelines and using the same procedures & processes
- not passing laws that hinder low-cost or free spay/neuter or basic pet care to all.
Spaying/neutering animals controls the pet population. Many South Carolinians cannot afford to take their pets to a veterinarian's office and they rely on these programs. Pets are likely to be left unaltered when low-cost/easy-to-access programs are not available.

- a budget from the State of South Carolina which includes monies to support these suggestions, to be shared equally across the State to cities, towns, counties and municipalities

Thank you for your interest in animal welfare and your efforts on this committee.

Rachel Elger
Columbia, SC