

Testimony Concerning HB 5836

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Epidemiologist

I am pleased to learn that the Environmental Committee is considering HB 5836, which would use existing funds in the state's Animal Population Control Program to expand spay/neuter and vaccination benefits to pets belonging to low-income families.

I am a registered voter in Clinton, and perform a variety of volunteer tasks for organizations concerned with animal health and welfare. As an epidemiologist, I donate time to assist veterinarians with research involving the health and welfare of companion animals.

On a societal level, assisting low-income people with funds for spaying and neutering and for vaccinations would obviously and importantly decrease the number of homeless puppies and reduce the spread of preventable contagious diseases. Using existing funds for these purposes would be both humane and cost-effective.

On a personal level, I recently spent some time in the waiting room of the New Haven Central Veterinary Hospital, which both provides high-end specialty care and serves as an urban "emergency room" for animals belonging to residents of New Haven and surrounding towns. One of the families had brought in a dog, wrapped carefully in an old blanket, who was having trouble delivering puppies and was herself at risk of dying. It was not a "planned pregnancy," and if the dog had been spayed, this never would have happened. I have no idea how the veterinary care was going to be paid for, but the mother dog was obviously much loved. In addition to being of great benefit and cost-effectiveness to society as a whole, increased assistance to low-income families for spaying/neutering and vaccinations would also enhance the quality of the lives of both the people and the animals they love.

I strongly encourage you to vote for this sensible and cost-effective bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

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