



**Potter League**  
*Enriching Lives*

**Animal Care & Adoption Center**

87 Oliphant Lane  
Middletown, RI 02842

T: 401.846.8276  
F: 401.846.0681  
info@potterleague.org

**Spay & Neuter Clinic**

235 Elm Street  
Warwick, RI 02888

T: 401.369.7297  
F: 401.369.7295  
clinic@potterleague.org

**Pets In Need Veterinary Clinic**

50 Amaral Street  
Riverside, RI 02915

T: 401.270.3832  
F: 401.270.3487  
pinclinic@potterleague.org

May 3, 2021

Representative Stephen M. Casey  
Chairperson, House Health and Human Services Committee  
House Lounge - State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
**Re: House Bill - 6283**

Dear Chairperson Casey and Members of the Committee:

Based on a 2019 national study by the University of Tennessee School of Social Work's Program for Pet Health Equity, there are approximately 91,000 dogs and cats owned by Rhode Islanders who are receiving public assistance. Most of those households cannot afford veterinary care at a private veterinary clinic, and those animals go without care. The Potter League for Animals works in cooperation with veterinarians statewide to provide veterinary care for those who would otherwise go without.

To accomplish our goal, we operate three facilities throughout the state dedicated to helping people and animals stay healthy, and keep families together. Our three sites serve different purposes, but all work together to improve the lives of families in Rhode Island. At all three sites we employ veterinarians who provide the lowest cost care available to pet owners in need – our services are often the only means for animals to receive veterinary care in their community.

At our Animal Care Center in Middletown, we care for thousands of homeless animals each year, all in need of veterinary care, in addition we provide free pet vaccine clinics at public housing facilities on Aquidneck Island and subsidize veterinary care for Newport County residents who go to private veterinarians. At our spay and neuter clinic, we employ two full time veterinarians who, in a typical year, sterilize over 7,000 dogs and cats from throughout the state so we can help prevent unwanted litters. At the Potter League Pets in Need Clinic (PIN) in Riverside, we run the only full service non-profit veterinary clinic in the state. At PIN, the two veterinarians dedicated to that clinic only care for the pets of people who receive public assistance, a clientele who likely would not be able to access any care for their pets.

We are able to provide a broad variety of veterinary services to animals who would otherwise have no access to veterinary care because of the generous support of the people of Rhode Island. In spite of that support, we still struggle to provide everything animals need. Medications can be extremely expensive. At the PIN clinic, we are often helping clients whose pets have chronic conditions and need daily medication. Those clients often ask us for just a few days of medication at a time because they can't afford a full week, or a month of medication as you or I might receive from our veterinarian.



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Currently, state law prohibits veterinarians from fully participating in their support of helping everyone to access veterinary care because they cannot donate medication to nonprofit organizations. Frequently, veterinarians find themselves with an excess of medication and current law only allows for that excess to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of. I often think of how many more animals we could help if we could accept donated medication to provide care to homeless animals and animals in need.

Please support H6283 to make a difference in the lives of the people and animals of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Brad Shear, CAWA  
CEO  
Potter League for Animals

