



January 20, 2026

155 Plan Way  
Warwick, RI 02886

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 7020 Relating to Businesses and Professions – Veterinary Practice

Dear Chair Solomon, First Vice Chair O'Brien, Second Vice Chair Caldwell, Members, and Mr. Mansolillo:

On behalf of the Rhode Island SPCA's Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, supporters, and community members, and animals it serves, I respectfully request your yes vote on HB 7020 (Brien), bipartisan legislation that will expand access to veterinary telemedicine.

As a 25-year animal welfare veteran, far too often I have seen a beloved pet surrendered to an animal shelter simply because their owner could not afford care and wanted the best for their pet. 40 percent of pets surrendered to the Rhode Island SPCA during the past two years were surrendered for this reason. As nice as modern-day animal care centers are, one minute in a shelter environment is one minute too long. It is a shame to flood the animal shelter system with pets who have a home where they are loved when they just need access to care to stay there.

Keeping pets in their homes and out of the shelter system is good for their humans, too. Pets are good for our health, giving us purpose, lowering stress and blood pressure, increasing physical activity, and reducing feelings of loneliness and reducing cognitive decline in senior citizens.

The following is a list of a few common reasons pet owners struggle with access to veterinary care:

- It is difficult to leave their home due to mobility issues.
- They do not have transportation or access to pet friendly transportation.
- They cannot get their pet in a carrier to transport it.
- There are behavior issues that make the pet difficult and/or unsafe to handle outside of the home, especially when being handled by strangers while receiving veterinary care.

HB 7020 will help overcome these challenges and increase access to veterinary care for many pet owners.

Although veterinary telemedicine is not appropriate for all pet patients, it is a useful tool for common veterinary needs such as ear and skin issues, medications, flea and tick prevention, and behavioral and nutritional consults. The use of telemedicine will also be at the discretion of the individual veterinarian reducing any pressure to diagnose and treat using telehealth, so there should be no risk of a reduced quality of care.

The RISPCA appreciates your thoughtful review of HB 7020 and hopes you will support its passage.

Sincerely,

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