



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

40 Amaral Street
Riverside, RI 02915

T: 401.270.3832
F: 401.270.3487
pinclinic@potterleague.org

March 1, 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 - 5462

Dear Chairperson Casey and Members of the Committee:

My name is Brad Shear; I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Potter League for Animals in Middletown. On behalf of the Potter League for Animals I want to thank you all for considering legislation that will help us work toward our goal of reducing the overpopulation of free roaming cats throughout the State of Rhode Island. According to data from the American Pet Products Association surveys 90% of household pet cats are already spayed or neutered. Most of the remaining 10% are either facing financial barriers to sterilization or intentionally breeding.

Most of the production of free roaming cats and kittens who find their way to shelters are from unowned, free roaming cats. In most shelters' 'stray' kittens make up approximately 80% of our intake of kittens because our best estimates are that nationally about 2% of free roaming cats have been sterilized.

In a few places, like Rhode Island, there has been a purposeful and concentrated effort to spay and neuter those free roaming cats. In Rhode Island that effort has been led by Pawswatch and supported by many animal welfare organizations throughout the state. Pawswatch practices a management technique called Trap Neuter and Return (TNR), which involves trapping free roaming cats, sterilizing them at a veterinarian, vaccinating them, marking them visually by tipping their ears and returning them to where they were trapped. Trapping and relocating cats or otherwise removing them from the environment would cause a resource rich hole in the cat population that the cats who were left behind would fill.

Unfortunately, it has been suggested that this activity, which has proven to reduce the population of free roaming cats, is equivalent to abandonment of the animals that have been sterilized. The cats who are helped by TNR are returned to the same location and environment that they were originally living in. Their circumstances have been improved by no longer being at risk of producing more litters of kittens. If TNR is performed according to best practices and under the restrictions of this bill, it is the most humane and effective approach to minimizing the population of free roaming cats in our state.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Brad Shear, CAWA
CEO
Potter League for Animals