

VOLUNTEER SERVICES FOR ANIMALS TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H5128, H5447, H5668, H5926

TO CHAIRMAN ROBERT CRAVEN AND HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE RHODE ISLAND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES JUDICIARY COMMITTEE:

H5128 -- Volunteer Services for Animals supports penalties of up to three years in prison, a fine of \$1,000.00 or both as punishment for actions that result in the death of an animal. Civil authorities and the Courts need to have the means to curtail/punish offenses of this nature.

H5447 -- Volunteer Services for Animals would like to see the sale/distribution of farmed fur prohibited in the State of Rhode Island. Animals bred and raised for their skins live, suffer, and die with emotional suffering and physical pain. This should not be occurring in a civilized society.

H5668 -- Like the many humane organizations that have come before you asking you to prohibit feline declaw surgery, VSA does so again as well. Not to be repeated here are the painful stories behind the declawed cats that were told to you so many times before. Instead we will ask you to consider the sole objection to the legislation and where it is emerging. The objection is not about the animal and the detrimental surgery but about who should have the authority to make the declaw decision. The Rhode Island Veterinary Medical Association (RIVMA) believes that the veterinarian alone should make that decision. If RIVMA has not changed its position, then VSA hopes that our State will intervene and prohibit this surgery because it is never in the best interests of the patient—the cat.

H5926 -- This legislation will create a cause of action for the intentional or negligent injury or death of a pet. This bill is close to my heart; just recently VSA received an email request from a Providence resident asking for financial help for a kitten with a broken leg. VSA was told that the estimate cost of the surgery was in the thousands. We asked how did this happen and were told that a young person in the house got rough with the kitten. We asked if the parents of the young person were going to take responsibility for some of the medical costs and were told no. VSA supports this legislation because this one example shows the need for it.

VSA wishes to express great appreciation to the sponsors of the above legislation and to the Rhode Island House of Representatives Judiciary Committee for this hearing and also for being able to submit our testimony via email. Thank you.

Very respectfully yours,

Joanne J. Rongo

Chair of the Board of Directors

