

HOUSTON HUMANE SOCIETY



6 April 2011

The Honorable Jessica Farrar
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768-2910

Sent via email
and regular post

Dear Ms. Farrar:

On behalf of the staff, board, volunteers and the 15,000+ Texas donors of the Houston Humane Society (HHS) I respectfully urge you to pull HB3450. This bill is majorly detrimental to both private and non-profit animal agencies. To outline a few of the many problems with this bill:

1. The bill requires agencies to work with "rescue groups" regardless of past experience or knowledge of poor reputation. The HHS has personally witnessed 501c3 "rescuers" that are borderline cruel, are warehousing animals and do not provide healthy food or proper medical care. This bill would only exempt convicted felons or those with cruelty cases pending. We have seen cases where the courts feel sorry for the rescuer "who had just gotten in over his/her head", cruelty cases being pled out because of packed case loads, or a officials that are unable to prosecute for reasons not pertinent to the cruelty charge. These people, although they aren't convicted felons, should not have animals but this bill would allow them to take animals from any shelter.

2. In these tough economic times, having to hold all animals for five days minimum will cause cost prohibitive increases and risks many municipal and private organizations to close their doors. In addition, forcing agencies to call rescues on all animals will increase holding times by at least twice that time. Again, from years of experience working with volunteer rescue groups, they can take in excess of a week to schedule a foster and then get to the facility to pick up the animal. Often they refuse to take the animal because "it is not to standard for their breed", "their foster home fell thru", "they do not want an animal with any behavioral issues", "they do not want an animal with any health issues" and numerous other reasons they cannot rehab the animal to market.

3. If the agencies don't totally close down, intake will have to drastically be reduced. Where are these excess animals supposed to go???? In spite of the rhetoric, there IS AN ANIMAL OVERPOPULATION PROBLEM. As is the case with every shelter that does not turn animals away I'm aware of, HHS is filled to overcapacity with cats and dogs 365 days per year.

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 450528
Houston, TX 77245

Shelter Location:
14700 Almeda Rd.
Houston, TX 77053

(713)433-6421
Fax (713-433-4325)

www.houstonhumane.org

The HHS is a non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating cruelty, abuse and the overpopulation of animals.

4. Currently many shelters, Houston's included, are standardizing record keeping using the Asilomar Accords so we can get a more accurate idea of where the problems lie and start solving in a unified manner. Requiring an added reporting system for a special interest group would be redundant.

In addition, and again from experience, the "no kill" organizations manipulate agencies' numbers to raise funds for themselves. Most of these groups do not, and have not, run shelters. The ones that do have severely limited intake and turn away thousands of animals. Again, where are these excess animals supposed to go????

5. The bill requirements would compel agencies to have a veterinarian on staff if every animal with questionable health had to be evaluated by a "veterinarian licensed to practice in this state" since most animals turned into a shelter have questionable health. While the HHS has staff veterinarians and offer low cost spay and neuter surgeries to the public, most shelters do not have the funds to provide this and would be forced to shut down or severely limit intake. Again, where will these excess animals go???? What is the definition of the "trained behaviorist who is an expert on canine behavior"?

On the surface "No Kill" sounds like a panacea. I challenge you to look more in depth to the places that Nathan Winograd and his followers claim have been successful. Ask any animal shelter in California if the Hayden bill has really been successful. Check the numbers and records in Austin closely to determine for yourself if it has a true 92% save rate. Have all of the animals been spayed or neutered to prevent recycling of the overpopulation problem? Have they been following to the letter the restrictions proposed in this bill? I ask that you check closely to determine if some of the people pushing this bill don't breed and sell puppies, or have relatives that do, which are adding to the overpopulation problem they claim doesn't exist. A problem that does exist and will become even greater if agencies are forced to close their doors and/or limit their intake.

The people that are being attacked by this group are termed "killers", "worthless" and other derogatory terms that hurt deeply. I have never witnessed any organization or person that enjoyed killing animals. Shelter workers are not the ones that abandon, breed and cause the problems. They are the ones whose hearts hurt every time an animal is abused, mistreated or unwanted. They are the ones on the front lines that are affronted daily by owners who refuse to take responsibility for their animals.

Animals will suffer immeasurably if HB 3450 is passed. I have addressed only a fraction of the problems it would cause. Focus must be place on PREVENTING irresponsible breeding and selling of puppies and kittens, educating people on proper pet care and advocate responsible pet ownership.

Please reconsider your sponsorship of this bill that will cause a very detrimental effect on the animals in Texas.

Sincerely,



Sherry Ferguson
Executive Director

Jessica Farrar

From: Jessica Farrar
Sent: Friday, April 08, 2011 10:18 AM
To: Nicholas Reed
Subject: FW: HB 3450
Attachments: Farrar signed letter.pdf

FYI

From: Sherry Ferguson [mailto:sferguson@houstonhumane.org]
Sent: Thursday, April 07, 2011 6:31 PM
To: Jessica Farrar
Subject: HB 3450

Please consider this letter.

Sherry Ferguson
Executive Director

Click here to make a donation to help Houston's Homeless animals

Check out our amazing adoptables and awesome events at www.houstonhumane.org

Houston Humane Society has earned Charity Navigator's sixth consecutive 4-star rating for its ability to efficiently manage and grow its finances. Only 3% of the charities have received at least 6 consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that HHS outperforms most charities in America in its efforts to operate in the most fiscally responsible way possible. This "exceptional" designation from Charity Navigator differentiates HHS from its peers and demonstrates to the public it is worthy of their trust.