

Alan Applebury DVM

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Re: HB 439: Montana Commercial Pet Protection Act.

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Agricultural Committee,

I am a veterinarian licensed in the state of Montana. Some years ago, I sold my private practice and began the surgical sterilization of companion animals and feral cats for a nonprofit, 501(c)3 clinic. My work is primarily at a clinic in Corvallis, Montana, although, occasionally I travel within the state and outside the United States to spay and neuter dogs and cats.

At these clinics I frequently see animals who have come from commercial dog breeders. The suffering of these animals and their humans is untold. Commonly I see small breed dogs with periodontal disease so extreme that their teeth are falling out by 2 years of age. These small dogs are often lame as a result of dislocation of the knee cap. Larger dogs have ruptured anterior cruciate ligaments. Dogs of varying breeds have umbilical hernias. Ringworm is common. The dogs have hip dysplasia. Dermatitis causes undue discomfort. Many animals have infolded eye lids and/or extra eye lashes appearing randomly on the eyelid causing continual irritation of the eye and eventually corneal ulcers. German shepherds have pannus, a pigment on the cornea causing blindness.

Dogs come out of some of these commercial kennels unkempt. I have seen cocker spaniels with so many mats in their fur as to appear as one mat under which are oozing sores, even to the point of infection with maggots. Sometimes the nails are so long, they have grown into the flesh. Often stool in the fur is packed around the anus so that defecating is negatively affected. The animals frequently smell of urine. The conditions of the places housing these animals are squalid and cannot be tolerated.

Dogs are not socialized resulting in a painfully shy animals. In some dogs this is expressed as fear biting.

The medical problems are so numerous. The animals' caregivers often cannot afford the treatments. The animals suffer; the humans suffer. My clinics are designed for spay and neuter procedures only. However, these people are desperate and don't know what to do for their animals. Thus they come.

The State of Montana owes it to these dogs and to the people of Montana to stop the years of pain these animals endure. Support HB 439.

Sincerely,



Alan Applebury, DVM