



JOHN SPIROS

State Representative • 86th Assembly District

Senate Bill 450

January 13, 2015

Testimony from Rep. Spiros

Good morning and thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety for allowing me to have the opportunity to talk to you today regarding Senate Bill 450, a bill concerning the custody, care, and treatment of animals that have been subject to abuse and neglect.

The State of Wisconsin is behind the curve when it comes to the seizure and outcomes of animals that are taken into custody as victims of cruelty, abuse, and neglect, including dogs forced to participate in the barbaric “sport” of dog fighting. For example, when dozens of animals are rescued from a home in cases of neglect or abuse, or as a result of dog fighting, these animals are treated as evidence and are held in public and private shelters until the investigation is completed and the court case has resolved. This can mean years of confinement in crowded shelters, as well as additional costs to local governments and taxpayers.

As there is no provision for expedient resolution under current law, these animals can be held for several years as the case moves through the courts. In addition, current law does not require the owners of the animals to be financially responsible for their care while cases are pending. This puts the burden on both public and private animal welfare organizations to care for a sometimes large numbers of animals for years on end, ultimately costing a lot of time and money for these shelters and the taxpayers.

Earlier this year I visited one of these shelters, Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission, and saw firsthand the problems these shelters were dealing with. It is time to create more humane legislation that not only expediently moves animals through shelter systems where warranted, but holds owners of these animals responsible for the care of these animals. I believe that living animals should not be treated as traditional evidence.

The proposed legislation places the burden on the owner of the animals to pay the costs currently paid by public shelters, who have little expectation of restitution. The bill expedites the process to rehabilitate and adopt out animals otherwise held in an indefinite judicial limbo. Therefore instead of being held until a court case has been resolved, under the bill animals could be rehabilitated and/or adopted out a lot sooner. This bill would also allow the animal to be returned to the owner in a timelier manner if it is found that the animal was not involved in any crime.

This bill will also have the effect of saving animals lives. For example, under current law if a dog is found to have been involved in dog-fighting, that dog would be automatically euthanized if it is older than 1 year. This bill allows for a process to determine if that animal can be rehabilitated.

Another component of the bill is relating to stray hold times in Wisconsin. This bill would shorten the required time a shelter must hold an animal before it is able to undergo the process of rehoming or adoption from 7 days to 4 days. In practice this bill allows shelters to find homes for safe and healthy animals on the animal's sixth day in the shelter, after the animal is held for a four day stray hold, plus the day of initial impoundment. Currently, animals must be held for a seven day stray hold under Wisconsin law – eight days in practice. As Wisconsin has the longest stray-hold time in the country, this measure would put us nearer the national average and improve outcomes of stray animals in Wisconsin. Long stray holds don't help a significantly higher number of animals get home. The majority of "lost" animals that come to a shelter are reunited with their families on days one through four of the state stray hold. For example at Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission only 1% of animals were reclaimed on days five through seven of the stray hold. Long stray holds also have the consequence of making more animals sick because they overcrowd shelters, and illness and overcrowding cause unnecessary shelter deaths.

I was able to hear from the Humane Society in Minnesota, where shelters located near the state border that is required to hold dogs from Minnesota for a minimum of 5 days, per Minnesota state law, and dogs from Wisconsin for a minimum of 7 days, per our state law. The shelter confirmed they see no difference in the reclaim rate of animals between the two states, and just as high a percentage of animals are able to make it home in the shorter time period required by Minnesota state law.

This bill is supported by the Wisconsin Humane Society and shelters from across Wisconsin. There will be additional testimony today from individuals who work in these shelters to explain why this bill is needed and how it will save animals lives. This bill is also supported by law enforcement officials as well as those who deal with prosecuting these types of crimes.

I introduced Assembly Amendment 1, which made some technical changes to the bill, suggested by the Legislative Reference Bureau.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of this bill, and I would welcome any questions.



The power of compassion.

**Nancy Weiss, DVM and Senior Veterinary Director, Wisconsin Humane Society
Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 450
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, February 4, 2016**

Honorable Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 450. My name is Dr. Nancy Weiss, and I am the Senior Veterinary Director at the Wisconsin Humane Society and have worked in animal shelters since 1998. The Wisconsin Humane Society (WHS) intakes approximately 13,000 domestic animals every year, and my team of six shelter veterinarians oversees the medical care of each animal in our facilities in Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Racine Counties. Of the thousands of stray and surrender animals we medically care for each year, one of our biggest challenges is the prevention of communicable illness in the shelter. From a medical perspective, I can verify that shorter stays in a shelter keep animals healthier and save lives.

One of the most common and challenging health issues facing animals in shelters is upper respiratory disease. Although generally treatable, upper respiratory disease, especially chronic infection, is challenging to treat in a shelter environment. In addition, we measure its transmission as a proxy for disease transmission in general; other disease that may be transmitted, some of which are very serious. When the length of stay, the total time that an animal spends in our care, decreased at WHS by 30% due to a different approach to population management, we found that the number of cats and dogs who picked up an upper respiratory infection at the shelter decreased by about 40%. In addition, for animals who did contract an upper respiratory infection in the shelter, the average treatment times decreased by 40% because shortened stays at the shelter mean fewer animals on a daily basis and better conditions for those animals.

The bill reduces Wisconsin's stray hold, which is effectively the longest in the nation. Most states have a stray hold of 3-5 days; Wisconsin's is written as seven days, however it is effectively eight days since the initial day of impoundment isn't counted. Every day that an animal spends in a shelter exposes him or her to stress and potential disease; the longer the stay, the more risks to the animal. It's important to note that just 1% of the dogs and cats who enter animal control in Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Racine Counties were reclaimed on days five through seven of the stray hold. Shelters across the state find similar trends. When we consider the stress and potential disease exposure that animals face at even the nicest shelters, it seems cruel to keep animals in shelter longer when they have such a small chance of being reclaimed between days five to seven. Disease and overcrowding are leading causes of preventable euthanasia in impoundment facilities. Reducing the length of seized and stray holds will save animals' lives.

We supported the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission in caring for some of the dogs seized from a dog fighting ring. Under current law, victims of dog fighting like those my team cared for must be euthanized after the case is resolved. Wisconsin is one of just 12 states left in the nation that support this practice. SB 450 will remove this practice, allowing experts to exercise judgment about whether or not an animal is safe for placement. In addition, the bill creates a process for seized animals to move through the system more quickly, which is critical for the health of these animals and others in shelter.

Thank you for your time. I ask you to pass SB 450 out of committee with both the stray and seizure components intact. From my perspective as a shelter veterinarian, it is one of the most important things we can do to save the lives of Wisconsin's animals.

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U.S. Stray Hold Periods by State

Alaska	72 hours with no ID/120 hours with ID
Arizona	72 hours
Arkansas	5 days including day of impoundment
California	4 days + 1 for day of impoundment
Colorado	5 days
Connecticut	7 days
Delaware	72 hours
Florida	4 days (no hold on animals under 4 months)
Georgia	5 days
Hawaii	48 hours
Idaho	6 days
Illinois	Chicago: Dogs with no ID 3 days, Cats 0 (zero) days, both with ID 5 days
Indiana	7 days
Iowa	3 days
Kansas	5 days
Kentucky	3 days
Louisiana	4 days
Maine	6 days
Maryland	5 days
Massachusetts	7 days
Michigan	4 days no ID/ 7 days with ID
Minnesota	5 days
Mississippi	5 days
Missouri	5 days

Montana	72 hours no ID/96 with ID
Nebraska	72 hours
Nevada	4 days
New Hampshire	96 hours
New Jersey	7 days
New Mexico	3 days
New York	NYC - 72 hours
North Carolina	72 hours
Ohio	5 days
Oklahoma	72 hours
Oregon	72 hours
Pennsylvania	Philly – 48 hours
Rhode Island	5 days
South Carolina	5 days
South Dakota	3 days w/o ID/5 with ID
Tennessee	3 days
Texas	3 days
Utah	3 days no ID/5 days with ID
Vermont	3 days
Virginia	5 no ID/10 with ID
Washington	5 days
West Virginia	7 days
Wisconsin	7 days + 1 impoundment
Wyoming	72 hours



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**Anne Reed, Wisconsin Humane Society
Testimony in Support of 2015 Senate Bill 450
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
February 4, 2016**

Honorable Chairman and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 450. It's my privilege to lead the Wisconsin Humane Society, Wisconsin's largest and oldest animal welfare organization. We have shelters in Milwaukee, Racine, and Ozaukee Counties, and we are the primary organization housing stray and seized animals in Racine and Ozaukee Counties.

We strongly support the entire bill, including its provisions for seized animals, but I'm going to talk here about the stray hold provision of the bill, because it affects more animals and is not understood by many in the public. Contrary to what some people will tell you today, the stray and seizure provisions of this bill are both based on the same critical principle: short stays save lives.

Long forced stays crowd shelters and endanger animals.

Imagine you're driving on the highway. You're cruising along, and you come to an accident in the opposite lanes. The traffic on your side slows down. The cars around you were many car lengths apart a minute ago, but now they're bumper to bumper, lane to lane. If cars could catch disease from each other, they would. Once you're past the accident, the cars speed up, and they're far apart again. Are there fewer cars on the road? No, it's the same number of cars. Because they're going faster, the highway isn't crowded. When they were going slowly, it was very crowded indeed.

Next imagine you're on the highway and a couple of cars are going slowly in the right lane. Is the highway crowded? No, not if those are the only slow cars. The quicker cars just go past them in the left lanes, with plenty of room.

Now imagine the speed limit on the highway is 10 miles per hour. Nobody is allowed go faster than that. Now we're bumper to bumper, lane to lane, all the way to Oconomowoc, or Milwaukee, or Marshfield, or Kewaskum, every hour of every day.

Our current stray holding period is like a ten-mile-per-hour speed limit for every one of the thousands of animals who become stray every year in Wisconsin. It makes every shelter more crowded than it needs to be. And because animals can and do catch diseases from each other, it puts every stray animal at real risk of illness and death.

A four-day stray hold will keep animals healthy without hurting owners' ability to find them.

Currently the law says we have to hold stray animals for seven days. We can't count the first day, and we have to wait all the way to the end of the last day. That means we can't start helping animals – finding homes for them, giving them most needed medical care, and so on – until their ninth day in our shelters.

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The owners of stray animals all over the state have told us, by their behavior, that those last few days are wasted. If a dog is going to be claimed by its owner, we know the odds are overwhelming that it's going to happen by day four. Sadly, cats are almost never claimed by owners at all – but when they are, it's by day four. Fewer than 1% of animals are reclaimed between days 5 and 7, in every city or town where we have data. But in hopes of the vanishing possibility that somehow an animal might be in that tiny group, we're making thousands of animals sick, by forcing them all to stay until the ninth day. We're making the speed limit 10 miles per hour for everybody.

Let me explain how this affects animals in a very real way. Here's a scenario that happens very often. A cat comes into MADACC, Milwaukee Animal Control, as a stray. At the Wisconsin Humane Society, we "pull" more animals than any other organization from MADACC after their stray holds are up, and we find homes for them. On her fifth day at MADACC, this cat is still healthy. If it were legal, we could bring her over to our shelter and find her a home. But we can't take her until the ninth day. And by that time, because MADACC is crowded with every animal having to wait until its ninth day before we can help, she has gotten sick. We have many, many homeless cats back at our own shelter, and we have a responsibility to protect them from contagious disease. So we don't bring that cat to our shelter – and often, she doesn't get better. She was once somebody's pet, and she could have been in a happy new home. But she's dead, because Wisconsin law forced her to stay at a shelter longer than she needed to.

It's the same dynamic in small communities as well as large ones, large shelters as well as small ones. No matter how big or small your shelter and how many stray animals your community has, the shelter will always be more crowded, and less safe for animals, the longer each animal stays.

So why are people testifying today in favor of a long stray hold?

You may well wonder: if it's so clear that short stays save lives, why are there animal advocates here to oppose a shorter stray hold? With respect, they don't run animal shelters. One of the most common logical errors we all make is to take an idea that seems logical on a small scale, and assume it would also be logical on a large scale. If you are thinking about one individual stray dog, and you want to have the maximum possible chance that an owner will reclaim it, how long do you hold the dog? The longer the better. There's only a tiny chance, a Powerball chance, that someone could claim the dog after a long time in the shelter. But it's theoretically possible, and we think we heard a story, or maybe imagined a story, where it happened somewhere. It seems to make sense. But when you try to turn that into a rule for thousands of stray animals, it doesn't work. When you do that, you've made the speed limit 10 miles per hour for everyone, and animals get sick and die in overcrowded shelters.

You'll hear people say that a shorter stray hold would allow shelters to euthanize animals sooner. I want to be sure you clearly understand how mistaken this is. There are few if any shelters in our state who euthanize healthy animals just because their "time has run out." That practice went out with the rotary dial phone. Nowadays it's illness, not time limits, that kills animals in shelters. But let's say there's a

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shelter out there euthanizing healthy animals based on time limits alone. If that's true, why are they doing that? Because they think it's the only way to manage their space. And why are they out of space? Because their shelter is crowded – *required* to be crowded by our long stray holds. Just like the slow car in the left lane, we can give animals who need more time all the time they need – but only if we can get other animals through fast enough to leave space for them. If euthanasia for time limits alone is still going on anywhere in Wisconsin, it's *because* of our long forced hold for every stray animal.

You will hear that shelters can do more to help owners find their animals. Every field can improve; let's keep doing better by all means. But there is no reason to keep crowding shelters with long holds until we do better. To the contrary, when struggling organizations are overwhelmed with crowding and disease, it's all the more difficult for them to launch new approaches.

This bill will save lives.

Long holds cause crowding. Crowding causes illness. Illness causes death. This bill is the most important thing our state can do right now to save more shelter animals.

We urge you to pass the bill out of committee with both the seizure and stray provisions fully intact, and we thank you for your work.

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We all support Assembly Bill 487 and Senate Bill 450 and urge you to, as well. Here's why:

- **The bill saves animals' lives.** Disease and overcrowding are the leading causes of preventable euthanasia in impoundment facilities. Reducing the length of seized and stray holds saves lives.
- **The bill saves tax dollars.** The longer the hold, the more taxpayers pay, and the fewer funds are available for other critical functions. In the extra days required by a long hold, taxpayers are paying a high price for a small number of animals.
- **The bill brings Wisconsin in line with other states.** Wisconsin has one of the longest stray holds in the nation. Most states' holds are 3-5 days; Wisconsin's is 7. In addition, Wisconsin is one of only twelve states that still requires the arcane practice euthanizing victims of dog fighting.

Say "YES" to AB487/SB450



How would things change for victims of animal cruelty?

Under current law, animals seized for cruelty are often held until a case is over, even though their evidentiary value declines within days. In the past, shelters have been required to hold animals for as long as years while cases proceed – and then have been required to euthanize dog fighting victims when the case is over. This bill provides ways to let animals leave the shelter much sooner, and allows common-sense judgment to govern whether an animal can be safely adopted.

How would things change for stray dogs?

Under current law, stray animals must be held for a minimum seven days – eight days in practice, because the law does not count the day of initial impoundment. This bill allows shelters to adopt out animals on the animal's sixth day in the shelter, after the animal is held for a minimum four-day stray hold, plus the first day of impoundment.

Most animals are reclaimed on days 1-4 of the stray hold.

In fact, just 1% of the dogs and cats who entered MADACC in 2014 were reclaimed on days five through seven of the stray hold. Shelters across the state find similar trends. Forcing animals to stay a full seven days increases stress, disease, and overcrowding.

Bay Area Humane Society, Elmbrook Humane Society, Green Lake Area Animal Shelter, Humane Society of Marathon County, Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC), Oshkosh Area Humane Society, Sheboygan County Humane Society and the Wisconsin Humane Society strongly support AB 487/SB 450. By allowing shelters to find homes for animals sooner, the bill would save animals' lives, save taxpayer dollars, and bring Wisconsin into line with other states.



**Ann Gutting, DVM
Medical Director
Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission
Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 450
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, February 4, 2016**

Honorable Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 450. I am Dr. Ann Gutting, the Medical Director at the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission. After my graduation from veterinary school in 2010, I completed a one year internship in Shelter Medicine and Surgery through Oklahoma State University, spending half of my time at City of Tulsa Animal Welfare, a municipal city-run shelter, which affirmed my desire to continue to use my skills and education in a large animal control situation. I felt this was where I could most affect and improve the welfare of companion animals. I was recruited to MADACC and moved to Milwaukee County in 2011 from Oklahoma specifically for this position. During my visit to the shelter and the community, it was obvious Wisconsin citizens cared and for the animals in need in their community, but a clear vision of the future was not yet seen at MADACC as to how to accomplish this task. In the past five years, I have been the only veterinarian for the approximately 11-12,000 stray, injured, ill and neglected animals that arrive at the shelter yearly. As a large shelter with animals coming and going at all times with unknown preventative care, infectious transmissible disease control has been my greatest challenge. With my experience and education focused in Shelter Medicine, I can say that a shorter shelter stay, as this legislation proposes, is vital in saving more animal lives in Wisconsin.

MADACC is the largest open intake animal control facility in the state of Wisconsin. In 2013, we were lucky enough to come under the leadership of Karen Sparapani who, instead of seeing MADACC as an animal control that was performing basic functions adequately, saw a vision of the future that would bring us in line with the highest levels of shelter care and make us a model facility. She saw the solution to our stray and abused animal problem in our county to be a combination of internal and external factors and we moved forward basing our course of action on rational, scientifically proven, and obtainable processes. We did not base it on the raw and well-meaning emotion from those who care deeply about animals, but who are not experienced in large scale animal welfare operations. These paths have included developing relationships with community leaders in law enforcement and expanding our relationship with other animal welfare organizations, specifically the Wisconsin Humane Society, to increase our influence on the community in preventing animals from entering shelters and keeping them in homes. It has included a large scale renovation project on our building to increase the living space and care we can provide for the animals, which we are currently in the midst of. Despite the housing changes and providing the best possible care we can, the sad fact is a shelter is not a home and not an ideal living situation for these animals, so another focus of MADACC and these organizations and leaders became proactively seeking legislation change in the form of this bill.

While it seems counterintuitive on initial thought that holding animals longer in the shelter will

increase their chance of finding a home, it in reality becomes the opposite for many reasons. As a medical professional, I want to return my focus to the most important reason having to hold an animal longer in a shelter environment negatively affects them. As mentioned previously, transmissible diseases, especially respiratory in nature, in dogs and cats are usually treatable in healthy vaccinated animals. Many to most of the animals we receive at MADACC are not previously vaccinated, and still others are not healthy upon intake. Being brought into a new environment with the stressors of many other animals in the same environment further lowers their immune systems making them more susceptible to illness. The incubation periods of these illnesses vary, but as a general rule, tend to be 7 days. The same as our current stray hold time. This means by day 8 when an owner hasn't reclaimed this animal, it is now many times showing signs of respiratory disease on a day when it should be receiving veterinary work up, including spay/neuter, and being placed on the adoption floor to find a new home. We do our best to work around it and keep the animals as healthy as possible, but I cannot express how disheartening it is as the one who is supposed to prevent illness in these animals to not be able to. I cannot express how hard it is to see an animal that came in healthy and happy 8 days ago become so ill simply because it had to sit in a shelter longer than it had to. As so few animals are reclaimed past day 5 of a stray hold, it is simple logic to decrease this required time period.

To also discuss another area in which SB450 could improve animal welfare that I have also been directly involved in at MADACC is removing requirements for euthanasia of animals used in the practice of dog fighting, as well as outdated requirements for holding animals for what became years during investigations and prosecutions of their owners as evidence. When I began at MADACC in 2011, several dogs were already impounded for dog fighting investigation. Over the next 2 years, various groups of 2 up to 10 dogs at a time continued to come in and be held. While we provided the best care we could for these animals, it is inhumane to the animals and demoralizing to those of us that care for them to become bonded and hold these animals for such lengths of time. Initial injuries and evidence on the dogs are documented within a week and usually within 2 days of their impoundment. As evidence, they no longer are useful as many wounds heal over time and temperaments change with different environments. SB 450 changes previous well meaning legislation to bring it in line with what I believe was its true intended goal – to better protect these dogs and prevent dog fighting. SB 450 was written with the oversight of those of us with experience and education in animal welfare, as well as those of us with true experience with these animals.

In conclusion, I implore you to pass SB 450 out of committee with both the stray and seizure components intact. As a shelter veterinarian, I believe it is one of the most important things we can do to save the lives of Wisconsin's animals. Thanks you so much for your time today.



**Karen Sparapani, Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission
Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 450
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, February 4, 2016**

Honorable Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 450. I have both the enormous privilege and responsibility of overseeing the largest animal control facility in the State of Wisconsin. Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission's annual animal intake has ranged from a high of 14,000 animals per year, to our lowest intake year ever, 2015, where we took in just over 10,500 animals. Every day I see firsthand what a difference this bill will make for the animals in MADACC's care, and in the care of shelters across the state. I ask you to pass SB 450 as written so that together we can make a historical and lifesaving change to current Wisconsin animal welfare practices and bring our state in line with accepted best practices in our industry.

SB 450 comprehensively addresses forced holds for animals -- both seized and stray -- to reduce the amount of time that animals must spend in the shelter. Shortening these holds will save animals' lives. In the animal welfare community, one of our most important metrics is length of stay, representing the amount of time that an animal stays in the shelter. The length of stay in a shelter environment for any animal is one of the most critical factors in determining its success. Shelters do all they can to limit stress and disease transmission, but the reality is that shelters are stressful for animals.

Current Wisconsin law requires that animals from abusive situations are held for long periods of time, even when they provide absolutely no evidentiary value after the first few days. Animals linger hopelessly until lengthy court proceedings have occurred, and dogs seized for being involved in fighting are required to be euthanized, regardless of whether or not they display any aggression.

Over the past five years, MADACC has held nearly 50 dogs in our building that were related to dog fighting cases. A number of those dogs spent over three years in our care. SB 450 would create a much needed update of Wisconsin's animal cruelty laws and afford the victims of crimes against animals the justice they deserve by limiting the animals' stay after critical evidence is collected.

SB 450 also brings Wisconsin's stray hold in line with best practices already employed in nearly every other state. Wisconsin's stray hold is effectively eight days, the longest in the country. Since Wisconsin law does not count the initial day of confiscation, our seven-day stray hold becomes eight days. Animals are not actually transferred or adopted until the day after the hold ends so we can't help animals until day nine in the shelter and, by then, many animals are sick. SB 450 would reduce the stray hold to four days, which becomes five with the day of impoundment, and that would mean that a shelter could not move to transfer or adopt out a stray animal in their care until day six. Most states have stray holds of 3-5 days, so SB 450 brings Wisconsin squarely in line with best practices being utilized in other states.

Although I know it seems counterintuitive, longer stray holds do not mean more animals get home. Almost all of the animals reclaimed by their family at MADACC, and at shelters across the

state, are reclaimed by day three of the stray hold. In fact, in 2015, just 22 animals of the more than 10,000 who came into our facility, were reclaimed on days 5 – 7 of the hold, the days SB 450 proposes eliminating. This data shows that those days aren't serving animals, whose likelihood of becoming ill increases with every day in the shelter, or taxpayers, who are getting a diminishing return on their investment by funding a stray hold for thousands of animals for days that the public has shown us aren't needed to get animals home.

It's important to note that SB 450 only shortens the minimum legal stray hold. There is not now nor will there ever be a maximum hold period. Shelters will always hold animals longer when needed, especially when it means getting an animal home to his or her family. Additionally, when this bill passes, shelters and municipalities are still able to make their own policies and maintain the longer hold if they feel that time period serves their community best.

MADACC, like all animal control providers, takes their role in the community very seriously and understands their special duty to the public. It is always our goal to get animals back to their original families. We routinely work with owners who need more time or other resources to reclaim their animal. Where warranted, shelters extend hold periods, waive fees, many of us even pay some fees out of our own pockets. We deliver animals home for those with transport issues. Shelters are happy to do whatever we can for people and the animals that love them; that is why we chose to work in this industry.

Only when all efforts to get an animal home are exhausted will we look to transfer the animal or place it for adoption through our own program. There are no expiration dates on adoptable and healthy shelter animals. They will not be automatically euthanized at the end of the stray hold if an owner does not come; there are many options for animals in Wisconsin. Times have changed and euthanasia is the least likely outcome for an unclaimed stray animal in a shelter.

By passing SB 450 as written, you will be making the most impactful change for animals in the state of Wisconsin in the past 30 years. Animals are no longer euthanized in shelters due to time and space; they are euthanized because they become too sick or behaviorally challenged to be humanely held or safely adopted out into loving homes. Over the last three years, my team and I have lowered euthanasia by 42% at MADACC, and SB 450 changes will help MADACC and other shelters support even more animals by ensuring they leave my shelter free of illness.

A five day stray hold strikes the right balance for owners who are trying to get a beloved family member back home and for the animals who will not be reclaimed to give them the best chance for a positive outcome. Unfortunately, some animal lovers have misunderstood the intent of this change. Some have images of shelters that are decades old, when euthanasia was the likely outcome for any animal entering a shelter, or feel the public is not equipped to navigate the search for their own animal. This has created an unnecessary divide surrounding this bill, which is unfortunate since both sides ultimately want the same thing: for all animals to leave shelters alive and to be in loving homes. But we cannot create public policy based on anecdotes or scenarios that are outliers to normal occurrences. Good legislation is created to do the most good for the most people and, in this case, animals, and SB 450 does that as written.

SB 450 will, in one step, result in reducing shelter euthanasia and giving the very deserving companion animals in Wisconsin the chance to be in a loving home where they belong. Animals do not belong in shelters; they belong in homes. Allowing animals to linger in shelters one minute longer than necessary is something the State of Wisconsin can no longer allow, and shortening forced holds for both seized and stray animals will save animals' lives and taxpayer dollars.

AB487 and SB450 Will Hurt Lost Pets and Owners



AB487 and SB450 seeks to change the current stray hold for lost pets in shelters and stray holding facilities from the current 7 days to only 4 days.

The current lost pet system in Wisconsin is fractured and ineffective including the problems outlined below. The proposed change will prevent lost pets from being reunited with their families. Pets may be put down or adopted out before their family ever finds them.

- No cross-communication between facilities. A lost pet may wander outside the jurisdiction and end up in one of many stray holding facilities including vet clinics, town offices, police departments, shelters, boarding kennels and individual contractors who hold lost pets in their garage or barn.
- Many facilities do not post photos of found pets online, requiring the owner to visit every facility in person to check. This is time consuming and costly. Many owners do not even know all of the places they should check.
- Many facilities do not proactively look for owners of missing pets by doing such things as scanning for microchips or checking lost pet reports online or in local newspapers.
- Some facilities have outdated microchip scanners or no microchip scanners at all.
- Many facilities have inconvenient hours making it difficult for owners that work long hours or two jobs to pick up their lost pet in the required time.
- Many facilities have exorbitant fees to reclaim a lost pet. Fees can be in excess of \$200. Owners often need a few more days to come up with the money to reclaim their pet.
- Many facilities do not take into consideration barriers that prevent people from reclaiming their pets including lack of transportation, lack of cell phone or internet service and owners with mental or physical disabilities.
- Right now, it is too easy for a facility to proclaim that “the owner wasn’t looking for their pet” and put him/her down or adopt him/her out immediately after the stray hold period has lapsed, instead of proactively being part of the solution.

**We ask that you vote NO to AB487 and SB450.
Pets are family members and deserve to be treated as such.**

Lost Dogs of Wisconsin is an all-volunteer organization. We strive to preserve the owner-animal bond by providing free resources to owners of missing dogs.

In 2015 we helped 2830 dogs get safely home. www.lostdogsofwisconsin.org

Good afternoon, my name is Susan Taney. I have been in the animal welfare sector for over 25 years from managing /working in shelters to running individual rescues. However, today I bring a rather unique perspective, as I have been helping coordinate the reunions of lost and found dogs for the last 6 years. I am the co-founder of Lost Dogs of Wisconsin and Lost Dogs of America and the founder of Lost Dogs Illinois.

Through this experience, I have found out what works and what doesn't. Based on that experience I have come to the overwhelming conclusion that the general public does not know what to do when they lose their loved family member or when the public finds a lost pet.

This SHOULD be a major concern for municipal shelters as these families with lost pets are not only to be considered clients of the facility, but they are also the taxpayers who are paying for the shelter's services. If finding their lost family member takes time and the shelter is not allowing that time, the shelter is doing a great injustice to both the client and the taxpayer.

I would like to bring to your attention to a recent set of guidelines put forth by the ASPCA regarding what they consider to be the minimum standards that shelters and stray holding facilities should be doing to help reunite lost pets in shelters. Many states have adopted these practices by law. At this point Wisconsin has not yet adopted any of these practices.

Examples are:

1. Shelters must check for ID, including microchips, tattoos, etc., at the time of intake.
2. Shelters must serve notice to identified owners of stray animals, and the hold times for stray animals must account for mail delivery.

3. Shelters must provide public notice, appropriate to the community, of stray animals entering the shelter.
4. Shelters should be authorized and encouraged to reduce or waive redemption fees.

Attached are the standards for review.

Most Wisconsin shelters and stray holding facilities do not meet these minimum standards recommended by the ASPCA. We lack the basic framework for a good Return to Owner system for lost pets. AND now Wisconsin wants to lessen the time owners have to find their pets.

Proponents for the bill have suggested that other national cities that are achieving a 90% or better live release rate are doing so because they have a shortened stray hold. In fact, there is no correlation between short stray holds and save rates. You can find plenty of shelters with short stray holds and horrific kill rates. And again, without any standardized reporting in Wisconsin by animal shelters to our Department of Agriculture, it is very difficult to do any analysis of the data.

In the last 20-30 years, the status of animals has been elevated from the barnyard to the bedroom. They are now loved family members. It is time to change our mindsets and fix the system. Please amend AB487 to remove the portion that reduces the stray hold from 7 days to 4 days in order for every loved family member to go home. Lessening the stray hold period only manages to get the pets out of the shelter sooner; it does NOT effectively promote getting the pets back to their families. We believe implementing new processes while retaining the 7 day stray hold will be far more effective.

Thank you for time and consideration.

Please Amend SB450/AB487

February 4, 2016

Dear Senate Committee:

I am writing to you about my concerns regarding bill SB450/AB487. I am the developer and operator of a National Database for Lost & Found Pets. My concern regarding the bill is the reduction in the stray hold time from 7 days to 4 days. The issue regarding court case dogs is entirely different and both issues should be addressed separately.

Through my experience in working with many groups and shelters regarding strays, there are three main issues that I want to raise that are affected by the reduction in hold time.

1. Currently, when a pet goes missing in a populated area, the animal could be taken in at many different shelters. When shelters do not provide photos and other information about their intakes online, it makes it extremely difficult for the owner to visit each shelter, every vet clinic, search websites, Facebook pages, newspaper ads and also physically search for their pet. Often times, their pet is found within just a few days, but other pets take longer to find.
2. Pet owners away on vacation that have left their pet with a pet sitter or a boarding facility, may not even be aware their pet has gotten out and is missing. The extra few days makes a big difference.
3. Often times people finding pets are not notifying shelters or surrendering the pet to the local shelter as they fear for the pets safety. Reducing the stray hold time will not improve this situation.

Once a National Database is in place where every lost and found pet is listed and everyone knows where to look to see if their pet has been found and is at a shelter, then reducing the stray hold time then reducing the stray hold time then may make sense. But not at this time.

Please amend SB450/AB487 to remove the portion that reduces the stray hold from 7 days to 4 days. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Goddard

www.helpinglostpets.com

Opposition to SB450/AB487

February 4, 2016

Dear Senate Committee

On behalf of the members and supporters of **Missing Pet Partnership**, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to reuniting lost companion animals with their owner/guardians, I wanted to comment on the proposed legislation of Assembly Bill 487 and the Senate companion bill SB450.

It is my understanding that the State of Wisconsin is considering reducing the stray hold requirements on impounded dogs and cats in Wisconsin animal shelters from 7 days down to just a 4 day hold. Although I am sure this has been proposed for the purpose of lifting a "burden" from taxes by saving them money, I can assure you that a reduction in stray holding times as proposed will only create *more* burdens on your tax payers due to the permanent displacement of loved companion animals. It is difficult enough for tax payers to recover their missing pets as it is, and forcing them to know how and where to search for their missing pet in such a restricted time frame only reduces the chance that lost dogs and cats will be returned home.

Instead of decreasing the hold times, Wisconsin shelters should consider maintaining their 7 day hold time and adopting innovative lost and found programs which include making certain that they are following the position statements outlined by the ASPCA which include that "Shelters must establish a reasonable process for matching stray animals admitted to the shelter with reports of lost pets received by the shelter from owners." Sadly, most animal shelters are simply not taking the time to cross reference lost pet reports with the animals held in their cages. Instead, shelters are passively waiting for the owner of the stray animals to show up at their facility and when no one shows up, this is blamed on "uncaring" owners and the focus of the shelter is to rehome

the animal. In reality, when dogs and cats escape from their families it causes conflict and chaos in the life of the pet owner. The majority of families return home from work only to discover their pet escaped from their home (Day 1 of holding period at the shelter). They may drive around their neighborhood, but they are not able to go to their local animal shelter since by the time they find out where it is, the shelter is closed. They do what they can that night (on line perhaps) but the next day, they must go to work (Day 2). Sometimes they are able to get permission to take the following day (Day 3) off of work, but more than likely they will have to wait until the weekend before they will have the time and ability to drive down to the local shelter. If your stray holding periods are reduced from 7 days down to 3 or even 4 days, people whose dogs and cats go missing on Monday will likely be adopted out to new families (or euthanized) by the time the pet owner can get there (Saturday).

Instead of reducing stray holding times, Missing Pet Partnership encourages animal shelters to instead adopt innovative lost pet recovery programs, to educate their staff and volunteers in how to counsel the public in lost pet recovery techniques, and to partner with on-line lost pet recovery sites like Lost Dogs of Wisconsin, Lost Dogs of America, and HelpingLostPets.com. Shelters that have taken these proactive, progressive steps to increasing lost pet reunifications have seen remarkable increases in their RTO ("return to owner") rates and a decrease in the numbers of animals that they must take in. Through training provided by Missing Pet Partnership, one shelter in Lynwood, Washington increased their RTO to 27% (the national RTO rate on dogs is only 16%) while another shelter in Boston quadrupled their RTO on lost cats. Recently I co-presented a national webinar hosted by The Humane Society of the United States called, "Five Steps Shelters Can Take to Increase Cat Reclaims." This webinar is available for free online for anyone, including Wisconsin animal shelter staff and volunteers to learn more about preventing lost cats from ending up in shelters in the first place. The webinar can be found

here:<http://www.animalsheltering.org/trainings/keeping-cats-homes-5-steps-shelters-can-take-increase-cat-reclaims>

An increase in education and adopting cutting edge lost pet recovery programs, rather than reducing the stray hold times, is what is needed to help more animals. The proposed reduction from 7 days to 4 days will dramatically decrease the percentage of pet owners in the state of Wisconsin who are able to recover their lost pets.

Respectfully submitted,

Kat Albrecht, Founder of Missing Pet Partnership

www.missingpetpartnership.org

I am Opposed to Shortening the Stray Hold

02-04-16

Dear Senate Committee:

I am writing to you about my concerns regarding bill SB450/AB487.

In October of 2013, one of my cats, Lily, became frightened by window repairmen and escaped through one of the windows. I left food and water out for her, but didn't see her. I decided to check the abandoned house where I had found her a couple of years before. She was there, but wouldn't come to me, so I left food and water for her. I repeated this process a couple of times. After not seeing her for a couple of days, I started checking the MADACC website for female cats. I did not see her. After about a week, I decided to look at all of the pictures of cats on the website. At that time, I thought that Lily had a microchip. (I later found that I had somehow missed getting her microchipped along with my other pets). I found her under the category of undetermined gender. Although it was a few minutes after the shelter closed, I called MADACC's number. Thankfully, someone answered and said I could see the cat in the morning. I also e-mailed a couple of friends who worked at MADACC to try to ensure that no mistakes were made and she was not going to be killed before I got there. (She was a "fraidy cat" and not too cooperative with the staff). I went to MADACC the following morning. Lily was very glad to see me. She cooperated with staff to get her immunizations updated and get a microchip.

Due to my job and other problems, I was perhaps not as aggressive in my hunt for Lily as I should have been. However, I think that work and other concerns might cause other pet owners to need more time than 3 or 4 days to locate a lost pet."

I am very thankful that the shelter had to keep Lily for a week before she was scheduled to be killed. She is in the room with me now and is doing just fine.

Karen Smith Burns, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Please Amend SB450

2/3/2016

Dear Senators,

Thank you for your consideration of SB450/AB487 that would save dogs seized in fighting/cruelty investigations. Thank you Senator Petrowski for introducing this bill, and Rep. Spiros for authoring this bill. Thanks to all that have sponsored and co-sponsored this bill.

I've been an advocate for seized dogs from fight busts and animals held in crimes against animals since the day I learned of a dog fighting bust back in Milwaukee, on June 10, 2011.

On that day, I learned that despite my best efforts, our local animal control did not have the best interests of seized dogs in mind. As a concerned citizen, I attempted (within what little power I had), to convince the authorities to give these dogs conditions that would help keep them safe and happy in a long term situation – to have properly sized kennels for their size and breed, to be given daily mental stimulation, training, and outdoor time. To assess them behaviorally so that the gentle ones with no behavior risks could be handled by volunteers. But our local animal control told me that all these dogs were untouchable and unable to be even seen by volunteers, regardless of their behavior. They all were kept in an evidence locker in a closed-off back room, only to slowly become too cage crazy to rehabilitate, after 4 years of isolation. Many if not most, had to be put down. Animal Control taped paper to the only window they had to the outside world, because they would get excited when someone walked by – their only stimulation.

Our local animal control in Milwaukee (MADACC) is a temporary holding facility, which does not in my opinion, have the proper shelter design for long term holds. Because MADACC is a semi-governmental semi-private commision, they are not held to the standards of Act 90; they are somehow exempt. Unfortunately, they do hold the contract with the City of Milwaukee for holding seized dogs as long as necessary for a court case & trial of their abusers . The dogs from the fight bust in 2011 were held for 4 long years; some of them began hurting themselves within one year due to their isolation and had to be humanely euthanized before the trials even began. We still do not have a full accounting of every dog that went through the process, as our local

animal control has declined all open record information requests related to the issue based on 'ongoing investigations', despite cases that have concluded long ago. We expect they will remain completely unaccountable for outcome of these dogs, using the 'ongoing investigations' clause indefinitely or until interest runs out, whichever happens first.

I have done many radio interviews, appeared in various newscasts on this issue. I have a popular social media site about saving Milwaukee's Court Case Dogs.

I fully support this bill with one exception.

I believe reducing the hold times for lost dogs and cats is a separate issue, and this should not be considered as part of this bill. It is attaching an unneeded and unwanted controversy to what otherwise would be an outstanding bill for the cause that is most dearest to my heart.

The reduced hold time has struck such a nerve in the community that I believe there should be a robust debate, separate from this issue. We should have the opportunity to discuss the hold time issue, without putting the court case dogs bill in jeopardy. We should in fact look at the lost dog process in Wisconsin, examine failure points in the process, and propose good fixes utilizing basic innovations that should be made available to every holding facility at very little cost to the taxpayer.

I ask that you amend this bill to strike the lower hold time for lost dogs; and pass the bill.

We must (and we will) Save Milwaukee's (and Wisconsin's) Court Case Dogs with your kind help.

Thank you.

David Mangold

Opposition to SB450

February 4, 2016

Dear Senators:

I could not disagree more with the "logic" put forth by Spiros and Petrowski. Nor, as I have learned, do the many fine small rescue groups in the state.

As someone who lost a pet, I can attest to needing the longer time period. First, we were on vacation when our dog disappeared (not uncommon as I have learned), so it was three days before I could begin looking for my girl. Next, she disappeared from East Troy farm area, so I had a minimum of three shelters to check. The Racine County shelter is located at the east end of the county, adding to my distress. One major issue, of which I was unaware so you may be also, is that giving shelters a verbal description of your pet gives you a false sense of security. I received calls, only to find that the animal was nowhere close to matching a description of my Annie. This meant that I had to visit these sites and make a visual check of animals that had been brought in.

I'm really distressed that the authors would once again pull that "taxpayer money" language since owners are charged a hefty amount when, and if, they retrieve their beloved pet, as is an adoptive family. So that's just political jargon meant to perk the ears of the uninformed!

If they, or you, truly wish to reduce the amount of time a lost animal is in shelter, you will require all rescue facilities to post a digital image of pets after a 48 hour period. This is of no cost to them and would be of huge benefit to both lost animals and their families. You would also require all pet owners to have microchips implanted. These are measures that would actually help return an animal to its family.

Lastly, to say that a reduced hold is of benefit to the animal is, frankly, absurd. Yes, being in the rescue facility would be traumatizing. But to think that being taken from there by anyone other than their family members would not just be another trauma, shows a lack of caring and understanding. As a person who has done rescue work, I have seen these poor animals go through these times of being passed off to a loving home. To them, all they understand is that it is not family.

Kay Frédrick, Milwaukee

Jamie Foth
Testimony in support of Senate Bill 450
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, February 4, 2016

Dear Honorable Chairman and Committee Members,

I am a resident of Poy Sippi, Wisconsin and a volunteer for Lost Dogs of Wisconsin. I am in favor of Senate Bill 450 to decrease the stray hold time for pets.

After doing my own research and talking with many shelters, I believe that the shortened stray hold will save many lives. It is giving animals the chance to be transferred to other shelters and rescues that have room and potential homes. I believe that shelters are doing their part to find the rightful owners of strays, and I also know that many pets are reclaimed within the first 24 to 48 hours. After that time, most go unclaimed, leaving the animals to sit and wait for their now 7-day stray hold to be up to be adopted, transferred, or due to unforeseen circumstances, humanely euthanized. During that lengthened hold period, they often get sick.

As a Lost Dog of Wisconsin Volunteer, our main goal is to give owners of lost dogs the tools and resources to find their missing dog. Many times, the dog is returned to their owner before even ending up in the shelter. I think Lost Dogs of Wisconsin need to focus more on the microchipping of lost dogs and cats, to ensure they get home if they do enter a shelter, than on the working against this important legislation.

With this I ask, please pass SB 450 out of committee with both the seized and stray animal provisions intact.

Respectfully,

Jamie Foth
W2401 Liberty St.
Poy Sippi, WI 54967

Lost Dogs of Wisconsin Volunteer and Caseworker

Please Protect Families and Lost Pets by Amending SB450

02/04/16

Dear Senators,

I would like to thank all of you today for the opportunity to speak. I also want to thank all of the distinguished members of the committee for your public service to the State of Wisconsin. You are to be commended for that.

My name is David Woods from Wausau. I cover Marathon County and surrounding areas for Lost Dogs of Wisconsin as a volunteer caseworker.

Lost Dogs of Wisconsin is a non-profit, all volunteer group, with 55,000 FaceBook followers that help reunite lost dogs with their owners at no charge to those owners.

Last year in 2015, we helped to reunite almost 3000 dogs with their owners.

We do this with 70 volunteers around Wisconsin and we donate our own time and resources.

From computer people to caseworkers for each dog like myself that work with individual owners to find their lost dog.

I am here today to ask that the wording of AB487 reducing the stray-hold from 7 days down to 4 days be removed from this proposal.

This proposal started out as a great idea for the MADACC Court Case dogs. No offense because we are all in this together, but MADACC and the Wisconsin Humane Society helped to add the stray-hold wording to fit their own wants and needs.

The Milwaukee Court Case dogs and the stray-hold times should be two separate issues.

Reducing the stray-hold time is contrary to our efforts of getting more lost dogs home. Every Lost Dog Deserves To Get Home !

Big rescues and shelters have lost sight of one of their beginning main purposes. To help lost pets get back home. Not adopt them out in a convenient time frame or for smaller shelters to simply get rid of them because of cost.

In my experience in dealing with owners of a lost dog, it is time-consuming to wade through the confusing maze of where does my lost dog go if found, where do I look, who has the contract, where do I look if my dog goes out of the area.

All of this takes time.

We can all work together, rescues and shelters, and groups like Lost Dogs of Wisconsin to bring more lost pets back home. Lowering the stray-hold time does help help accomplish that.

Ways to get more lost dogs back home should include--

--Using our already free national database of helpinglostpets.com that covers all of Canada and the U.S.

--Mandatory scanning of an animal twice for a microchip at all shelters and rescues.

--Reducing the outrageous reclaim fees that we see

--Posting photos of all lost and found animals on websites and social media

I would like to close with a point from an article I read this week involving this proposal.

If I should lose my watch down here in Madison today, currently I would have 83 more days to find and claim my watch than if one of my dogs were lost in Wisconsin and sitting in a shelter somewhere.

The current 7 days is scary enough for a lost dog owner, let alone lowering that to 4. 4 days is not enough time.

All lost dogs deserve to get home.

Please remove or strike from this amendment the wording reducing the stray-hold from 7 days down to 4 days.

Thank You.

**David Woods--Lost Dogs of Wisconsin
Caseworker covering Marathon County.**

Please Amend SB450

February 4, 2016

Hello.

My name is Carlene Hoehn. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today.

I am a volunteer with Lost Dogs of Wisconsin. I have been with the group for almost 5 years and serve on their Board of Directors. I am asking you to amend AB847-(SB450) to remove the portion of the bill that reduces the stray hold time for lost pets.

In my years with volunteering with LDOW I have learned a lot about lost dog behavior, and subsequently behavior of the owners of lost pets.

Most owners do not know where to begin. They may spend a day or two waiting for the dog to come home, often on the advice of family or friends. They spend the first few days driving around the neighborhood looking for their lost companion before they call the local shelter.

Prior to working with owners I thought everyone knew to call your local police and the shelter in your area right away. I learned this is not true.

Many dogs travel long distances quickly and cross "borders" of shelter jurisdiction. Most owners may initially check with only the shelter for their city or county. Shelters and police departments are busy and do not usually offer owners advice on where else to check for their missing pet.

Owners may have physical or mental disabilities that prevent them from getting to the shelter. Lack of transportation, lack of internet service, lack of funds, English as a second language, elderly, - all of these things can limit an owner in how quickly they reclaim their lost pet.

The stray hold in Wisconsin currently is longer than most. But just joining the trend should not be a goal entered into without thought. Before we change let's make sure we make a change that will give Wisconsinites a fair chance to reclaim their pet and not unduly tax shelter resources. Other states examined their policies and procedures and enacted rules regarding mandatory microchip scans and online photos of impounded pets, and defining details of what "a reasonable effort to contact owners" means.

I am asking that AB487 (SB450) be amended to remove the portion of the bill that reduces the stray hold for lost pets. Let's examine the law for household pets in its own light and be sure any change is for the better.

Thank you

Please Amend SB450

February 4, 2016

Good morning, my name is Kathy Pobloskie and I am the director of Lost Dogs of Wisconsin. I live in North Prairie, Waukesha County. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today.

We are an all-volunteer 501.c3 organization and we are very proud to speak out for the families in Wisconsin who are devastated when their dog is lost and often don't know where to turn or what to do. In 2015, we helped reunite 2830 dogs with their owners.

I come from a unique perspective because I have actually testified twice in the past FOR legislation that would protect the court case dogs. Today though I have come to ask you to amend SB450 to remove the portion of the bill that reduces the stray hold for lost pets.

The vast majority of animals in shelters come from two sources. Strays, which are lost pets, and surrenders. I am here today to talk about lost pets. In fact, the ASPCA estimates that 40- 60% of animals in shelters are lost pets. Most of these pets do not need a new home, they simply need to go home. Proactively reuniting lost pets with their owner should be one of the main focuses of animal control departments.

The main intent of this bill (SB450) is to improve the outcome for seized dogs which of course is a very good thing. Unfortunately, the Wisconsin Humane Society and the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC) who helped draft the bill have also included a paragraph that reduces the stray hold for all animals (dogs AND cats). These are two entirely different issues and should be treated as such, not combined together in one bill.

Unfortunately, we have many obstacles in Wisconsin that prevent owners from finding their lost pets. Return to owner statistics are not available for most shelters so it is very difficult to assess the current situation. Milwaukee Animal Control states that they had only a 29% return to owner rate for dogs in 2014. Instead of working to improve that and bring it up into the 50% or better range that other similar animal control facilities around the nation are achieving, they have introduced language into a bill that would reduce the stray hold for lost pets.

When the Wisconsin Humane Society - Racine Campus were asked through an open record request about their statistics for a government held contract in Racine County they replied and I quote: *Pursuant to Chapter 19 (19.32), the statute on public records and property does not apply to the Wisconsin Humane Society.*

It is impossible to get an accurate representation of animal welfare in Wisconsin when most of the shelters and stray holding facilities do not provide statistics, even though they hold municipal government contracts that help fund their operations.

Proponents of the bill have not taken into consideration how seriously flawed our current system is. They have not taken into consideration that this is a large state and there are issues that need to be addressed everywhere (not just in Milwaukee County). It would have been nice to see proponents of the bill work towards fixing the problems to make sure ALL Wisconsin shelters and stray holding facilities comply with minimum standards to improve their return to owner rate by doing things like:

- Using a centralized database like the free system that we use, www.helpinglostpets.com
- posting photos of impounded pets online
- scanning every animal for a microchip at least twice with two different scanners using best practices for scanning (including not scanning them on or near a metal exam table or metal door)
- putting signs up where the dog or cat was found
- using volunteer pet detective groups to help match lost and found reports and track down dead end microchips
- reducing high reclaim fees
- requiring shelters to microchip or provide an ID tag for all adoptable animals and offering low cost microchip clinics (including enrollment to pet owners).
- requiring shelters to report statistical data to the state

I also want to address one other item that was brought to my attention. I was on vacation and unable to attend the Assembly committee hearing. Apparently though, one of the committee members asked a proponent for the bill, if his pet were adopted out to a new home before he could find it could he get it back? The answer from the person testifying was yes. Although I can't speak for the shelter that was testifying, I know from our experience that this is absolutely not the case in most instances. Once an animal is adopted out in Wisconsin the shelter has no legal obligation to provide the name of the new adopter. We have had this happen several times and unless the owner has the means to hire a private investigator and an attorney - the chance that they will be able to get their pet back is almost nil.

Preserving the owner/animal bond should be at the heart and soul of every animal shelter's core mission. Let's work together to fix our broken system.

I am asking you to amend SB450 to remove the portion of the bill that reduces the stray hold for lost pets. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kathy Pobloskie

North Prairie, Wisconsin 262 392 2196 www.lostdogsofwisconsin.org



**Best
Friends
Animal
Society**

SAVE THEM ALL[®]

Testimony of Lee Greenwood, Legislative Attorney in support of SB 450

Good afternoon Chairman Wanggaard, Vice-Chair Vukmir and members of the Committee. My name is Lee Greenwood and I am an attorney with Best Friends Animal Society. Best Friends is an animal welfare organization that works throughout the country to support legislation like SB 450. Our mission is to protect the interests of companion animals, such as dogs and cats, in our nation's shelter systems. Simply put, we work towards ending the needless killing of shelter animals.

Senate bill 450 will save lives and go a long way towards making the state a more humane place for animals. At the same time, it will bring Wisconsin in line with the vast majority of states in a number of key areas.

First, SB 450 will remove the stigmatization of dog-fighting survivors and give them the second chance at life they so richly deserve. Under current law, any dog that is seized from a fighting situation must automatically be killed if the owner is convicted of the crime. That's an incredibly inhumane way to handle the innocent victims of these heinous crimes, and it puts the state in rare company on the national level. In fact, Wisconsin is one of only 12 states on an ever-shrinking list with laws similar to this, and far fewer mandate that the dogs be killed.

Besides lacking compassion, the current law flies in the face of the current thinking amongst experts in the field. We know from years of experience that fight-bust survivors can, and do, go on to live wonderful lives as therapy and service dogs, breed ambassadors, family pets and lovely couch potatoes.

In fact, if you recall the Michael Vick story from a few years ago, in that case all but one of the forty-nine dogs rescued from Vick's property, including 22 that were taken in by Best Friends, were able to live out their lives. These dogs, like all dogs that enter an animal shelter, were given individualized behavioral assessments and placed in an appropriate setting.

Under SB 450, victimized dogs in Wisconsin will finally be given the second chance they deserve.

The other major provision of SB 450 is the reduction of the statutory "stray-hold" period from 7 to 4 days. The data on this point is pretty clear that a shorter stray-hold period can lead to dramatic increases in life-saving for the animals in a shelter setting.

A shorter holding period helps keep shelter populations from ballooning beyond capacity, which is a key element for increasing the number of lives saved. If a shelter cannot quickly free space to accommodate demand, the results are predictable and deadly. The shorter stray hold will give shelters an increased chance to find adoptable homes for these animals while also opening space to accommodate more animals in a safer manner. That's a win-win for the animals and the state.

Also, Wisconsin currently has one of the longest stray-hold period of any state in the country. By reducing the period from 7 to 4 days the state will put itself squarely in the mainstream on this issue.

Best Friends Animal Society
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Kanab, UT 84741
bestfriends.org

Best Friends Animal Society – Los Angeles
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**Best
Friends
Animal
Society**

SAVE THEM ALL[®]

At the same time, it is essential that shelters of any size and location do all they can to reunite lost pets with their owners. It is incumbent on shelter leaders to keep abreast of the most current 'best practices' to ensure that this occurs. With that said, the unfortunate truth is that the data is pretty clear that lost animals, especially cats, brought into a shelter are unlikely to be reunited with their owners. That is especially true beyond the first few days of the stray-hold period. While it may seem counterintuitive, the data consistently points to this sad truth.

Taken together, SB 450 will help save the lives of animals. Passage will bring Wisconsin into the mainstream amongst states on these important issues.

Our mission at Best Friends is to Save Them All and I believe that voting in favor of SB 450 will bring the state one step closer to reaching that goal.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Friends Animal Society
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Kanab, UT 84741
bestfriends.org

Best Friends Animal Society – Los Angeles
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Allison Davies CVT, Shelter from the Storm Animal Rescue, Madison, WI
Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 450
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, February 4, 2016

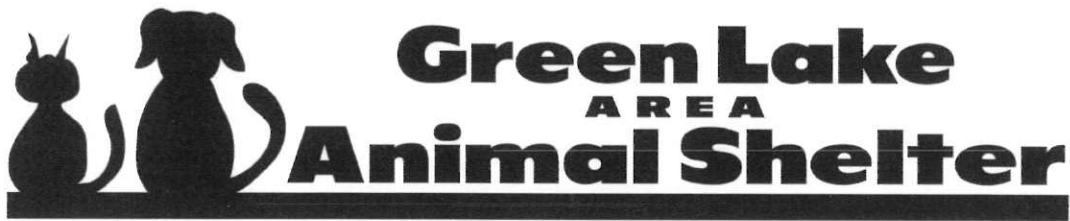
Honorable Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 450. I am the founder of Shelter from the Storm Animal Rescue, founded in 2005. We rescue and rehome an average of 400 animals a year. We also run the first and only full service low cost veterinary clinic in Wisconsin, yearly we spay and neuter over 12,000 dogs and cats. Although the majority of the animals we rehome are from Milwaukee Domestic Animal Control commission, through our clinic we work with 100's of animal rescues and shelters through our Wisconsin and we see daily what a difference this bill will make for the animals of Wisconsin in shelters and rescues.

As a rescue one of the most common reasons for us to delay putting an animal up for adoption is because they have come to us from the shelter with upper respiratory disease. This often delays the animal a week or more while being treated. This delay effectively limits the number of animals we can help due to space and resources. Passing the Senate Bill 450 would allow animals to leave the shelter sooner giving them a much better chance of being healthier when they enter rescue if no owner claims them.

I believe it is important to note the SB 450 only shortens the minimum legal stray hold and that if a local shelters see it to be more appropriate to have a longer stray hold they can. I also believe it important to note that rescues only want to help the animals that need their help and when a family comes forward for them, we rejoice that it is animal that has found its home and no longer needs our help.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to seeing Wisconsin join the majority of the United States in a progressive decision to change the mandatory stray hold to 5 days total, please pass SB 450 out of committee with both the seized and stray animal provisions intact



N6217 Busse Drive ~ PO Box 86 ~ Green Lake, WI 54941 ~ 920-294-3042 ~ www.glaas.org ~ DATCP License # 268441-DS

Dear Committee Clerk, Valirie Maxim-

My name is Janine Rubeck and I am the Shelter Manager for the Green Lake Area Animal Shelter in Green Lake, Wisconsin.

The Green Lake Area Animal Shelter supports Assembly Bill 487 and Senate Bill 450, and we encourage you to do the same.

This bill will save animals' lives, tax dollars, and will bring Wisconsin in line with other states' stray animal holds.

Under the current law, animals seized for cruelty cases are held until the case is over, sometimes years, and then often euthanized. This bill allows victims of animal cruelty and court cases a chance at a much faster and more positive outcome.

Statistics show that the vast majority of stray animals who are reclaimed by their owners are reclaimed in the first 1-4 days. At GLAAS, this time is much shorter. Unclaimed stray animals can be placed for adoption or transferred out to other rescue organizations much sooner.

Much of the emphasis on the opposing side of this bill focuses on the fact that it might be harder for owners to find their lost pets. Our position at GLAAS is that regardless of where you stand on this legislation, there is no substitute for having your pet microchipped and keeping your contact information current. In the event your pet goes missing and turns up at an animal welfare organization, the Wisconsin stray hold time would have no impact because your pet is microchipped.

Stray animals brought to GLAAS are posted on our website and social media, and every effort is made on our part to reunite pets with their owners. We also offer engraved ID Tags and microchipping on site.

Historically at GLAAS, pets reclaimed are typically reclaimed within the first 48 hours. 196 pets have been reclaimed by their owners since 2010, with only four of these after day three. While we are a small shelter not likely to be as hugely affected by this change in legislation as larger organizations like MADACC, we strongly believe that as shelters, we are all in this together, and what helps one of us save more lives, ultimately, helps us all do the same.

We ask that you please pass SB 450 out of committee with both the seized and stray animal provisions intact.

Thank you.

Janine Rubeck

On behalf of the Board of Directors

Green Lake Area Animal Shelter

Testimony of Jennifer Bevandic in support of SB 450, February 4, 2016

I am here today as a concerned citizen and animal lover who is respectfully requesting that this committee pass SB 450 in whole, as is, without any change to the stray hold provision. This lifesaving legislation will impact thousands of animals every year in Wisconsin and this unique opportunity to make an impactful and positive change should not be squandered due to misinformation and fears.

I have been fostering cats and kittens for MADACC, Milwaukee's animal control shelter, since the summer of 2014. On Jan 16th of this year I answered an urgent plea to foster a depressed, stressed, sick mother cat and her 5 newborn babies. Helping Josephine, I believed, would be as easy as setting her up in a warm quiet comfortable space and making sure she was content and getting the nutrition and emotional security she needed to nurse and raise her tiny babies. Sadly, that wasn't the case.

Josephine entered MADACC as a pregnant stray on January 6th and while waiting current legal hold period of 8 days for an owner that never came, or may have never existed or even brought her in when they did not want her to have kittens in their home, she developed anxiety and a severe upper respiratory infection. She gave birth to her tiny babies, scared and in a shelter with an infection that would not only threaten not only her ability to care for her babies sufficiently but expose them to disease without an immune system to protect them.

She came to my house on a strong antibiotic, unable to eat for three days. Soon after that the kittens started nursing less and less and developed the symptoms of the infection that their mother passed to them. The veterinarian could offer very few options for their frail little 3 1/2 ounce bodies and I stood by helpless in absolute horror as they died one by one over the next three days. With a shorter stray hold, I believe a healthier and less stressed Josephine would have had her babies in the safety of a quiet, loving foster home and there would still be 5 kittens alive growing stronger day by day until they were ready to be adopted.

Some groups would like the public to believe that shelters only want shorter stray holds so they can euthanize sooner but that is not the MADACC that I know. The MADACC I know has called to ask "how soon can you get here to pick up 4 sick kittens?" and "we have 3 kittens that have tested positive for FELV and we were hoping you could keep them for 6 more weeks so we can retest them" and "would you be willing to foster a 7 year old cat with contagious mange while he gets treated?" That's not a shelter that can't wait to euthanize their animals sooner. I'm proud to be associated with an organization that tries so hard to save lives. I believe with all my heart that this bill will help them to save more animals.

It is for Josephine and the thousands of cats across Wisconsin, of which only 5% of which will be lucky enough to be reclaimed by an owner, that I am pleading with you to do what many other states have already done. Please pass this bill intact to balance the legal hold period to maximize the live outcome rates for shelter animals while respecting the rights of owners to be able to reclaim their lost pet. Statistics prove if an owner has not come by day 5, they will not be coming. We cannot keep ignoring the best practices in animal welfare. We cannot cling to a long stray hold out of fear an animal might not make it out of a shelter alive, when that is already what is happening on a daily basis -- because the long stray hold itself is causing shelter overcrowding and death.

Please bring Wisconsin's law in line with the best practices that other states have already adapted to protect seized and stray animals. Passing this bill will save lives. Please pass SB 450 for the hundreds of Josephines that enter Wisconsin's shelters every year.

Josephine and her babies



Erica Schumacher, DVM
Testimony in support of Senate Bill 450
February 4, 2016

Hello, my name is Dr. Erica Schumacher and I am the Chief Shelter Veterinarian at Dane County Humane Society (DCHS) here in Madison, Wisconsin. I am not representing DCHS today but want to share my personal experiences as someone who has worked in animal shelters for 13 years.

I respectfully urge you to please pass Senate Bill 450 out of committee with both the seized and stray animal provisions intact. Other people are going to testify about statistics and the data that supports how shorter stray holds save lives. I am here to share how I have seen firsthand the harm (in the form of stress and disease) that long stray holding periods cause to animals in shelters.

Reducing the stray period will most certainly help dogs, as others will testify to, but the greatest impact will be for the many thousands of cats that enter Wisconsin shelters each year.

You may be wondering what staying in a shelter and stress has to do with cats getting sick. Let's talk about herpes. Yes, cats get herpes too! Just like humans, if a cat gets herpes (and the vast majority of cats have it), they have it for life. Also as in humans, cats with herpes can live perfectly normal lives until a stressful event causes a "flare-up." Unlike in humans, it typically only affects their eyes and respiratory tract and is therefore one of the major contributors to upper respiratory disease in cats. Crowding, living in a cage, unfamiliar noises, smells and sights all contribute to the stress experienced by cats in shelters. Their immune systems do their best to fight off disease but can't hold out for extended periods of time (such as our 7+ day stray hold). A shorter stray hold would mean less crowding, less illness, and more animals finding forever homes.

Progressive animal shelters are doing their best to work within the confines of one of the longest stray holds in the country. Knowing that the vast majority of cats that enter shelters are never claimed by an owner, our shelter has implemented a program called Open Selection that allows stray cats to be seen and met with by potential adopters *during their stray period*. They can even place an adoption hold but are not allowed to take the animal home until the end of the stray period. This program gives cats the best chance of being adopted as soon as possible after the stray period ends.

Because of this program, we know that many cats (and virtually every kitten) would have the opportunity to be adopted into a home well before the end of the current stray period. It is truly heartbreaking to watch an adorable, friendly kitten come into the shelter healthy, get an "Open Selection Adoption Hold" a day or two after arrival but not be able to go home until the end of his stray period. He waits in a too-small cage in an unfamiliar place, surrounded by many other cats in

similar cages, and gets sick with upper respiratory disease (URI). Now we have a kitten with an adopter that is ready and waiting to take him home...but can't. So they both must wait. Nobody wins.

URI is not always just a simple cold. Sometimes it is and they recover with a 14-day course of oral medication. Others are not so lucky. Some cats can become severely ill and utterly miserable. They often stop eating, requiring medication to stimulate appetite. They often get dehydrated, requiring that fluids be injected under their skin. They often develop secondary bacterial infections, requiring antibiotics. They often get congested, requiring saline nasal drops or nebulization.

Can you see how we are not just talking about cats with a simple cold? These infections can be mild but may be severe. We typically see more severe disease in cats that are more stressed – cats that are kept in the shelter for longer periods of time and/or cats that are shy or scared. I am lucky to practice in a shelter where we are able to go above and beyond when treating medical problems in our animals, including cats with upper respiratory disease. We do everything in our power to get rid of that URI and get the cat healthy so he or she can find a forever home. Unfortunately, not every shelter has those resources. Some shelters are not able to treat upper respiratory disease and must euthanize cats and kittens with URI, even those without severe signs. Some shelters have to euthanize a cat just because they heard it sneeze once. It is real and it happens every day.

As a constituent and a shelter veterinarian who will, along with my patients, see the far-reaching positive outcomes that would accompany the passage of this bill, I ask that you please pass Senate Bill 450 out of committee with both the seized and stray animal provisions intact.

Thank you so much for listening and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

Erica Schumacher, DVM

Erica Schumacher, DVM
Testimony in support of Senate Bill 450
February 4, 2016

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Thank you so much for listening and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

Erica Schumacher, DVM

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
Committee Hearing Testimony for SB450
February 4th, 2016

Senators
Good afternoon representatives,

My name is Renee Benell. Thank you for hearing testimony on SB450. I'm here today in support of the bill.

I previously worked at an animal shelter in Ann Arbor, Michigan for about seven years. In Michigan, stray dogs and cats with identification were held for seven days. Those without identification were held for four days. During that time I witnessed first hand why a shorter hold time for stray animals not only works, but allowed our facility and animals to thrive. Essentially what I observed throughout those many years is the faster animals could move towards adoption through our system, the better for all.

I'm originally from Wisconsin and moved back to work at an open admissions shelter here. Within a couple of days I became well aware of the detriments that the longer stray period had on the animals, the staff, and overall operations. It was difficult for me to accept this long hold period in Wisconsin and I was so encouraged when I learned legislation was being introduced to make some changes.

In most lines of business we generally see products or patients move through a system in a timely manner. Think of produce at a grocery store, seasonal clothing items in a department store, or patients in a hospital. Too much can log-jam the system and hinder a flow of operations. This is really all about increasing efficiencies and helping these animals move to a positive outcome as soon as possible. You'll hear from veterinarians and animal behavior experts as to why that is so important.

I'd also like to touch on the hardships that animal care workers experience. A term called compassion fatigue can generally be used when referring to the distress that comes with continually caring for others who are traumatized or suffering. Some studies suggest that animal care workers are a group more vulnerable to this distress than others. Sadly compassion fatigue can have similar effects to PTSD.

Animal shelter work is not glamorous nor does it pay well. People do the job because they want to make a difference for animals, but their body, mind, and spirit can suffer. I ask you to think about the fact that there are human beings who have to care for the hundreds of thousands of animals who end up in the over 200 animal shelters/rescues around our state. When we care for the abused and neglected, it takes a toll. The topic we're discussing today doesn't just affect animals – it also affects the hard working people trying to help them. I know that

this bill will lead to a healthier environment for the caretakers and people providing this services to our communities.

I know that change can be hard, but I've seen a lot of great change in this field the last decade! I also know that everyone who came here today to testify all care about the well being of animals. What I'd like to summarize with my background is that organizations in other states with shorter holds are successful and thriving with their return to owner rates, adoption rates and more. People and entities can and will adapt to change.

Another point is that this bill is simply addressing circumstances for animals who DO end up in animal shelters. I see it as a separate topic than addressing when animals MIGHT end up in shelters. There are things that can be done to help combat and prevent strays in shelters and I'd encourage us all to do more regardless of the outcome of this bill.

1. Actively promote low-cost microchipping and pet ID. Microchips are about the size of grain of rice and can easily be implanted by a technician or veterinarian. They are also inexpensive when purchased from a distributor. However, they consistently have very high margins or not offered at local veterinary clinics. We need more private practice veterinarians to be

advocates for microchips and offer them at lower prices.

Whole Pet: \$45

Country View: \$56.25

Fitchburg Veterinary Hospital: \$61 + \$41 exam

Arbor Ridge Pet Clinic: \$21 + \$51.95 exam for new

Lakeview Veterinary Clinic: \$40

Humane Society of Southern Wisconsin: \$30

Angel's Wish: \$20

Dane County Humane Society special rate: \$15

2. We need more organizations to offer low cost or free microchipping and pet identification in underserved communities. Many pet owners don't have the resources to go to a regular vet or afford microchipping. Again, the organization I worked at in Michigan would hold low-cost vaccine/microchip clinics to the public on a regular basis. We'd also go out into the community to do this at fire stations, pet stores, etc. Dane County Humane Society does this with discounted and/or donated microchips.

3. We need municipalities to promote microchipping! This can be advertised in conjunction with license renewals or at local events where people bring pets. The more animals who are chipped and identified

with tags, the more we can easily reunite with owners.

Lastly, technology exists to help owners find lost pets. The fact that animals end up in animal shelters is not an animal sheltering problem. It's generally a pet owner problem. Let's encourage our stray holding facilities to use technology to provide up-to-date information about stray pets. Let's have municipalities provide more messaging to people in our communities about what to do when their pet is lost. Your average person doesn't know what to do.

I'd like to show you an online tool that is available for organizations right now. It's called an iframe. Below you'll see the website for HSHV in Ann Arbor, MI. There are links for lost, found and stray animals. The lost and found animals are being populated to the website from lost and found reports that are submitted online by the public, populated in the organization's data management system, and pulled into this Iframe on the website. The stray animals are being populated onto the website directly from real-time operations at the shelter.

Owners have to be advocates for themselves and their pets. Animal shelters can use tools such as this, but you have to realize they have very limited resources to spend time and energy trying to make matches. I might call my dog a lab mix and someone else might call it a pit bull mix. Comparing animal's physical characteristics is not always

comparing apples to apples, so the endeavor can become very complicated. Again, data management systems for animal sheltering operations can do the work to help catch these lost/found matches, but we really need the owners to take the lead in the search. But again, this is not a humane society problem.

You're going to hear a lot of information about lost and found pets today but this bill is focused clearly one thing – the long awaited chance to adapt and improve our policies for managing animals in shelters in our state. I know it will make a difference, because I experienced it first hand. Thank you.

Home » Services » Lost & Found » Stray Cats

Lost and Found Resources

- [Lost and Found Report](#)
- [Tips for Finding a Lost Animal](#)

Lost and Found Animals

Lost

- [Lost Cats](#)
- [Lost Dogs](#)
- [Lost Others](#)

Found

- [Found Cats](#)
- [Found Dogs](#)
- [Found Others](#)

Stray

- [Stray Cats](#)
- [Stray Dogs](#)
- [Stray Others](#)

Stray Cats

[How to take a screenshot](#)

Below are cats that are currently at HSHV as strays. If you see a cat below that you believe may be yours, please contact us at 734-661-3528 or come to our Intake Department between 9am-11am and noon-5pm.

If you believe your pet is listed here, please call 734-661-3528 as soon as possible.

IMPORTANT: It is our policy to put any adoptable strays up for adoption after 4-7 days of their arrival (animals with ID are held longer). If your cat is lost, it is imperative that you contact us right away. To claim your pet, please bring:

- A picture of you and your pet, veterinary records, or other proof that the animal we are sheltering is pet
- Proof of a rabies vaccination. We can vaccinate your pet for an additional charge, if necessary.
- Be prepared to pay a \$35 Intake fee plus a board fee of \$25 per day for each additional day your here. You will also need to pay medical fees, if necessary.



30588537

30588537
Cat
Female
Domestic
Shorthair/Mix
10 years

Animal in Custody



30590065

30590065
Cat
Male
Domestic
Shorthair/Mix
5 years

Animal in Custody



Marlene Walsh, Bay Area Humane Society
Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 450
Senate Judiciary Committee, February 4, 2016

Honorable Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for your time this afternoon. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 450. I have worked in animal welfare for more than 30 years. As the Executive Director of the Bay Area Humane Society in Green Bay, Wisconsin, I see every day the impact that SB 450 will have for the animals entrusted in my care. Bay Area Humane has an annual intake of just under 4,000 animals each year, but with lost and found, public spay/neuter programs and vaccination clinics, more than 6,000 animals come through our shelter doors each year. SB 450 will make a difference for the animals we serve, as well as for animals across the state. I ask you to pass SB 450 with both the seized and stray hold provisions intact. Passing SB 450 will save animals' lives, save taxpayer dollars, and bring Wisconsin law that regulates processes for both seized and stray animals in line with other states' best practices.

Current Wisconsin law treats animals seized from abusive situations the same as any other piece of evidence, despite the fact that animals' evidentiary value diminishes very quickly. Animals are held until a case is fully adjudicated, which sometimes means that animals are sitting in shelters for years, with taxpayers footing the bill. In addition, Wisconsin is just one of 12 states that still has the practice of requiring euthanasia for dogs involved in dog fighting, regardless of the dog's behavior. This bill will allow experts to determine whether an animal can be placed based on behavior rather than history.

In addition, the bill addresses another type of hold that affects Wisconsin's animals: the stray hold. Wisconsin's stray hold is effectively eight days – seven days plus the initial day of impoundment – making it the longest in the nation. It's always the priority of Bay Area Humane – and every shelter – to get animals back to their homes, and we go to great lengths to reunite animals with their families including immediately posting a lost animal on our lost and found website pages, as well as on our Facebook pages and those of our volunteers and fosters.

It's important to remember that the bill lowers the minimum stray hold. Bay Area Humane and other shelters can, and always will, hold animals longer when families need additional time to reunite with their pets – perhaps they're on vacation or experiencing an illness that makes it difficult for them to reclaim within the stray hold.

The majority of stray animals, however, go home in the first four days of the stray hold, and just 3% of stray animals in our care are reclaimed between days 5 and 7, but all stray animals are held for the full eight days. Shelters are like hospitals: the longer a patient, an animal, is in our care, the more likely he or she is to get sick, no matter how great our cleaning practices. This is because animals are stressed in a new environment and their immunity decreases. It is not fair for our entire population of animals to be exposed to increased stress and disease to give a very small minority of animals the opportunity to go home, especially when nearly every other state in the country is successful in getting animals home with just a three to five day stray hold. It's time for Wisconsin to join the rank of states who have made the common-sense shift to a shorter hold, saving both animals' lives and taxpayer dollars.

This lifesaving bill is supported by progressive humane societies across the state, including The Bay Area Humane Society, Elmbrook Humane Society, Green Lake Animal Shelter, Humane Society of Marathon County, Humane Society of Southern Wisconsin, Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC), Oshkosh Area Humane Society, Sheboygan County Humane Society, and the Wisconsin Humane Society. Please vote to pass SB 450 out of committee. This bill will save animals' lives, save taxpayer dollars, and bring Wisconsin law in line with other states. Please pass SB 450 out of committee with both the seized and stray animal provisions intact.



February 4, 2016

Wisconsin law makers,

Thank you so much for your time and consideration regarding SB 450.

In an attempt to be brief, I'm going to assume you are familiar with the stats and facts supporting SB 450. I want to share a personal example, of why your support is so crucial.

"Simba" came into care with Dane Co. Humane Society in the summer of 2015, a Labrador Retriever weighing 34 pounds. He weighed less than half of his appropriate weight. Simba was confiscated from a horrible neglect situation, but could not become the property of Dane Co HS for 8 days. In those 8 days, he continued to lose weight, show classic symptoms of stress and face increased medical risk. That is despite the fact that DCHS is an exemplary example of a shelter that does everything they can to make the animals in their care, safe, comfortable and with as much medical care as they are allowed (without the dog being their property).

I met Simba on day one and immediately communicated a desire to foster. Every day was painful, that Simba and I waited until he could come home with me. Simba absolutely thrived in a home environment. Gastrointestinal problems cleared almost immediately, he started to gain weight, and slept like a baby.

Thank you for your consideration greatly increasing quality of life for dogs that are already experiencing horrible, discomfort, stress, anxiety and uncertainty. I submit my testimony with pictures to demonstrate the physical and visual difference to a dog placed in a home environment as quickly as possible vs. a Shelter.

**Greg and Sheila Hart
333 West Mifflin St. #7020
Madison, WI 53703**

Oliver &

"When you got your pals, you got all you need."

Many of you have probably seen a typical 3-year-old Labrador Retriever – a bouncy, playful dog that has miles of energy and is full of life. When Oliver came to Dane County Humane Society this past May, his kindness and love of life immediately showed, but his frail body told a different story.

Weighing just 34 pounds, he was extremely thin, had irritated skin and sores on his body, a double ear infection and a very upset stomach. Our veterinary team concluded that "gaining weight was imperative; but it needed to be done carefully," said Dr. Erica Schumacher, DCHS's Chief Shelter Veterinarian. "Luckily, Oliver's blood work came back normal, but his obsessive water drinking was concerning."

Oliver quickly won over staff and volunteers with his constant wagging tail and forgiving character. Our animal care staff carefully followed Oliver's special feeding program and slowly, but surely, he began to put on weight. Generous community support ensures that we are able to provide care and comfort to animals like Oliver throughout their journey with us:

Our behavior and foster teams decided his recovery would be smoother and less stressful in a foster home where he could relax and be closely monitored. Fortunately, a wonderful foster home was quickly found.

Sheila, an adoption center volunteer, was moved by his story and condition. She met Oliver and felt an immediate connection. "The day I got to take him home, he came trotting out with the foster coordinator, tail wagging, happy and eager, despite the fact that his body weight was half of what it should have been," said Sheila, Oliver's foster mom.

"I absolutely loved caring for him, it was such an honor and blessing. I heartily encourage others to foster."

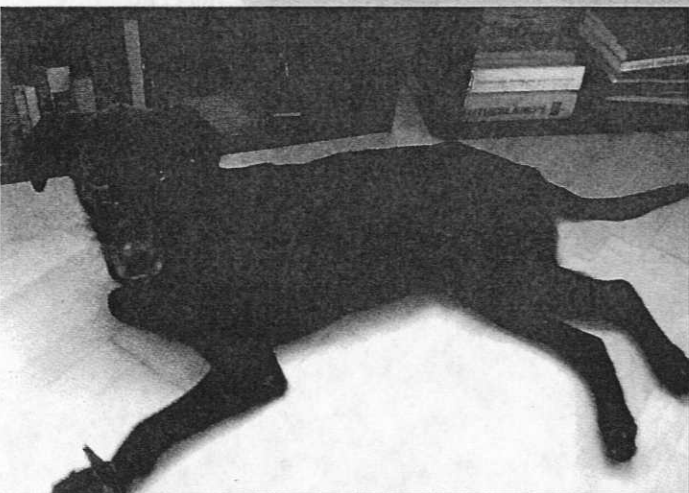
-Sheila, Oliver's foster mom



June 2, 2015



June 14, 2015



July 24, 2015

Company

Three months after Oliver arrived at DCHS, everything seemed back to normal except for his compulsive desire to drink water. With the help of Dr. Bates from Madison Veterinary Services, Oliver was diagnosed with psychogenic polydipsia (compulsive water drinking). While his water intake will need to continually monitored, Oliver's weight had finally reached a healthy and steady 68 pounds. He was ready to be adopted!

Donna and Dan heard Oliver's story through friends of Sheila. The power of social media allowed them to see Oliver's progress and personality via the pictures and videos Sheila posted online. When Oliver was made available for adoption, Sheila brought Oliver to Donna and Dan's house to meet them in person.

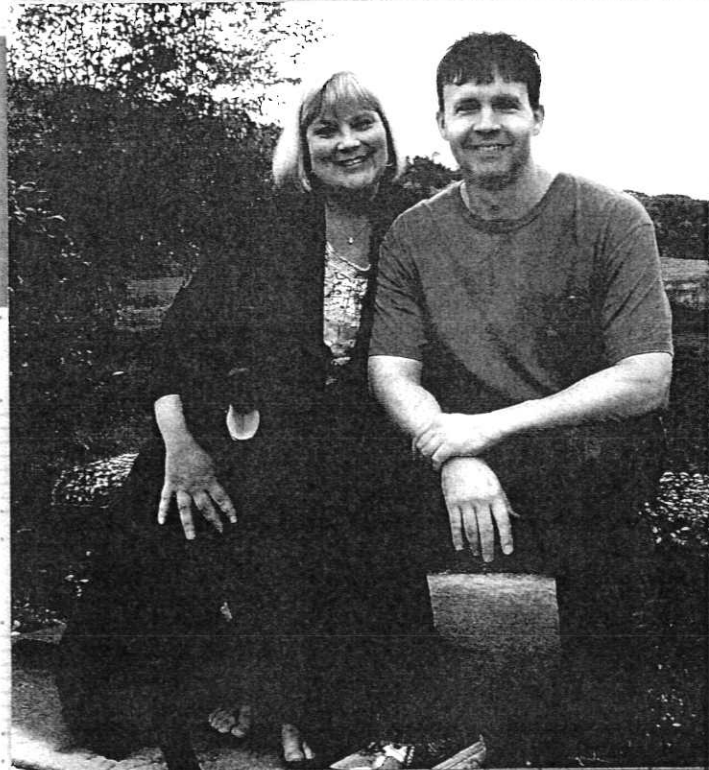
Oliver immediately made himself at home. He went straight to the basket of toys they had – quickly digging out the tennis balls bringing them to Donna and Dan to toss! "Oliver has this immensely strong spirit, excitement and jubilation for life that cannot be denied. We fell in love quickly!"

"Dogs have a remarkable sense of forgiveness - if only humans could learn from them! He will always have a loving, stable home with us for the rest of his life - that is the commitment we made to him."

-Donna and Dan, Oliver's new family

Through your donations, these success stories become the norm and not the exception. Your philanthropy supports our adoption guarantee, ensuring that every treatable animal gets top notch care in order to be placed for adoption. Your continued support makes that pledge a sustainable one for dogs like Oliver and many others needing comfort, care and compassion.

- Written by Gayle Viney, DCHS Assistant Director of Development



Oliver, Donna and Dan - October 2015

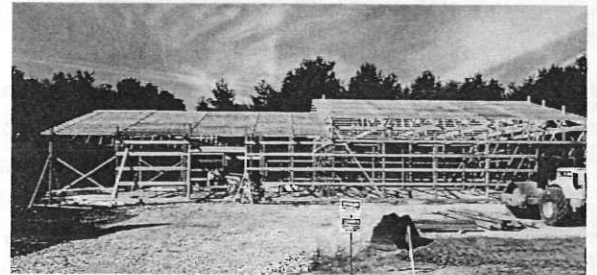
Building for a Better Future

Big changes are taking place to benefit some of the biggest animals in need at DCHS. On Monday, September 28, ground was broken on a brand new barn to house homeless horses and livestock. The current DCHS barn is limited to housing only two animals; all other horses and livestock are placed in foster homes, which can be located as far as an hour outside the Madison area. The new barn will include six stalls opening onto a large fenced pasture, an indoor arena for year-round training and storage rooms for hay and tack. Having horses and livestock located on DCHS property will increase public awareness of their availability for adoption.

The new barn construction is the first of three phases, which also include renovating the current barn to allow Four Lakes Wildlife Center to take full advantage of the space and raising awareness and funds to allow DCHS to care for homeless horses and livestock for years to come. Thank you to all our generous supporters who have helped us come this far. We look forward to opening our doors to even more area horses and livestock in need.



September 28, 2015 - (L to R) Gayle Viney (DCHS Asst. Director of Development), Bob Cohen, John and Gloria Etter, Kathy Wall, Bob Rau, Will Anzenberger (DCHS Director of Development)

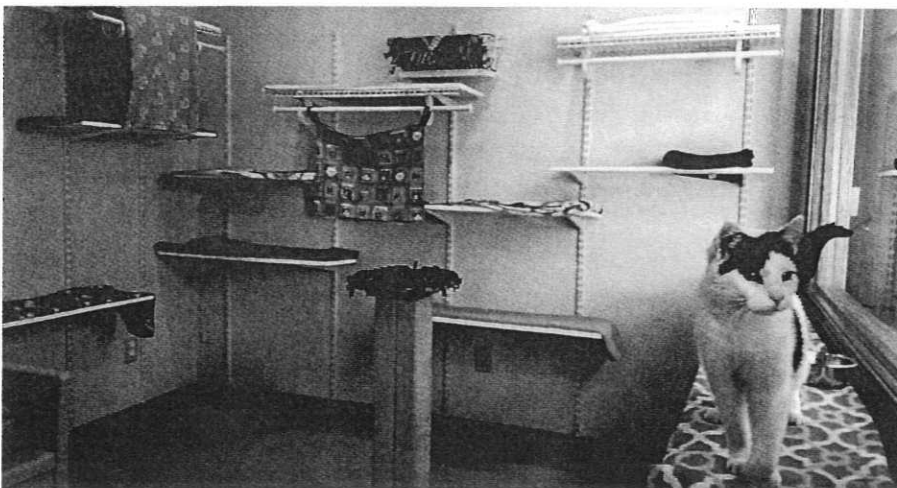


October 7, 2015

We Moved!

Cats and critters enjoy cozy digs at new Adoption Center West

On Tuesday, October 6, we opened the doors to our new Adoption Center on the west side of Madison. The new Adoption Center West is located on Grand Canyon Drive and can be seen from the Madison Beltline. The new building provides a larger space for staff and volunteers to work in, a great retail area where the public can purchase pet supplies, and most importantly, larger and more comfortable housing for homeless cats and critters. Many of the cats at the new Adoption Center West will be living in group housing which gives them more space to move around, other cats to socialize with and in general and a lower stress environment. Those looking to adopt will be able to meet many cats at one time in an environment where each cats' personality can really shine!



Adoption Center West

680 Grand Canyon Drive, #5
Madison, WI 53719

(608) 827-8997



Thinking of Selling Your Stocks?

Consider donating your appreciated stocks and/or securities

The last few months have seen many U.S. stocks falling sharply, but it should also be noted that the S&P 500 has gone up over 200% since March 2009 when stocks bottomed out after the financial crisis.

And while it may be better to give than to receive, with proper planning, it is possible to do both at the same time. If you are considering selling appreciated stock, mutual funds and/or other securities, you can donate directly to DCHS and not have to pay the long-term capital gains as you would if you had sold the stock. If you are holding securities with a loss, it is likely better to sell first, take the capital loss for tax purposes and then donate the cash.

Please consult with your financial advisor about the possibilities. If you decide to donate appreciated securities, please provide the following information to your financial institution: UBS Financial Services, Inc., DTC Clearing Number: 0221, Account Number: HZ31195, and Account Name: Dane County Humane Society.

Planned Giving at DCHS

Making your planned gift have the biggest impact

As a supporter of DCHS, you have made a positive impact with your generosity, and we hope you, as a donor, feel that joy of giving. For some development departments, engaging current donors in planned giving is a monumental undertaking because of the belief that the first priority is to apprise the donor of the latest tax breaks and every single planned giving option. Studies show, though, that donors care more about the impact on their preferred charitable organization than figuring out the complexities of the tax code.

For DCHS, planned giving is an extension of our philanthropic philosophy: to build strong relationships with those supporters that want to make a transformational impact on our mission. Thus, similar to other areas of our development/fundraising engagement efforts, we want to build authentic relationships based on trust and stewardship. These relationships lead to a stronger bond between you and DCHS. Sometimes, this will lead to a major transformational planned gift to DCHS, as it will be clear to both you and DCHS that you feel best about your planned gift while satisfying our organization's strategic priorities. Other times, it clarifies to each of us that your philanthropy might be better suited to another worthwhile cause, or that we will continue to have conversations about what impact you want to have on your charitable giving.

We recognize that our supporters want to help in larger ways, but you are not always sure what to do. The decision to include DCHS in your estate plans shows a sincere commitment to animals and a desire for your legacy of that commitment to continue for years to come. On October 26, we will be holding a Planned Giving Workshop to go over the basics of planned giving, including caring for your pets should they outlive you. The workshop will go over the typical forms of planned giving: bequests, donating appreciated securities, creating charitable trusts, and naming beneficiaries to life insurance policies, retirement accounts and more.

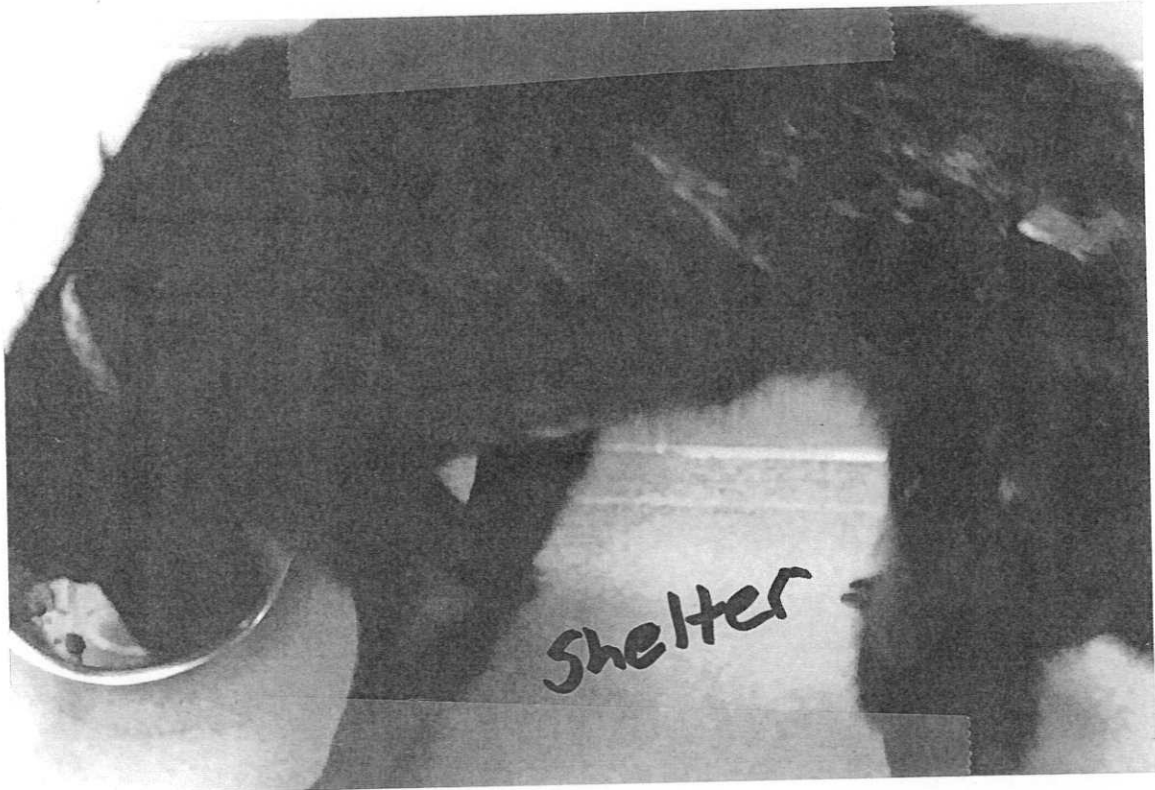
DCHS Planned Giving Workshop

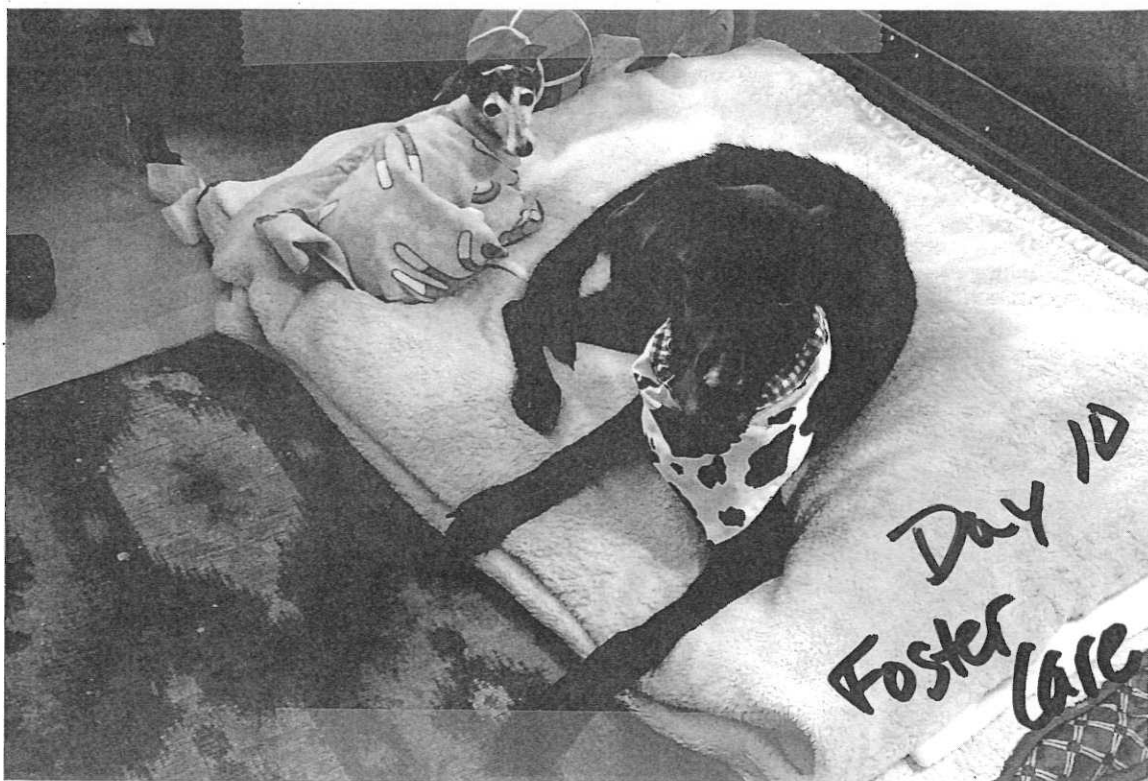
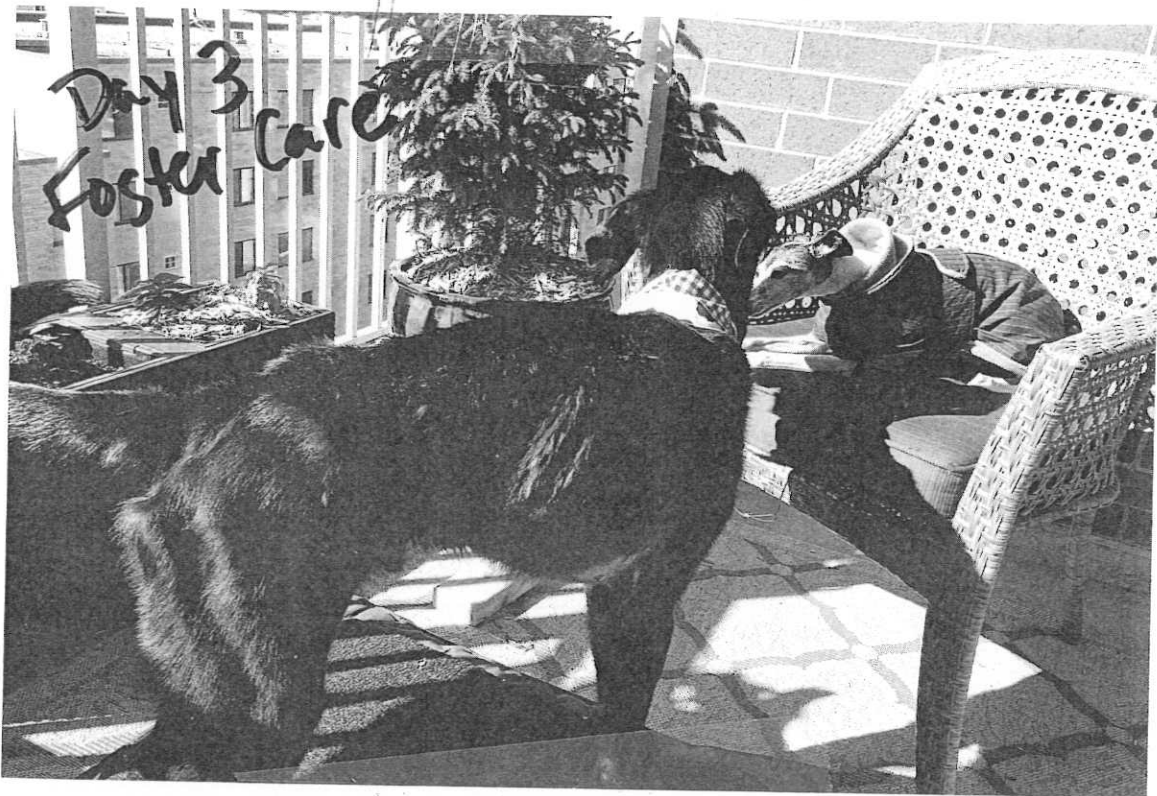
Monday, October 26, 2015
9:00 - 11:00 AM

Whyte Hirschboeck Dudek S.C.
33 East Main Street, Suite 300
Madison, WI 53701

Please call us at (608) 838-0413 ext. 118 or email us at development@giveshelter.org if you have any questions or would like to attend the Planned Giving Workshop.

To learn more about specific types of planned gifts, please visit our website at <https://www.giveshelter.org/planned-giving.html>





Maxim, Valirie

From: Mary <mary@catsndogs.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 2:45 PM
To: Maxim, Valirie
Subject: PLEASE distribute the following to the committee re Senate Bill 450. Thank You!

Mary Kirlin
Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 450
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, February 2, 2016

Honorable Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for your time this afternoon. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in strong support of Senate Bill 450. I have worked in animal welfare for over 20 years. As the Executive Director of the Humane Society of Marathon County in Wausau, Wisconsin, I see every day the impact that SB 450 will have for the animals entrusted in my care. Marathon County has an annual intake of 1500-2000 animals each year. I believe that SB 450 will make a difference for the animals we serve, as well as for animals across the state, and ask you to pass SB 450 with both the seized and stray hold provisions intact. Passing SB 450 will save animals' lives, save taxpayer dollars, and bring Wisconsin law that regulates processes for both seized and stray animals in line with other states' best practices.

Current Wisconsin law treats animals seized from abusive situations the same as any other piece of evidence, despite the fact that animals' evidentiary value diminishes very quickly. Generally, animals are held until a case is resolved, which sometimes means that animals are sitting in shelters for years, with taxpayers and humane society donors footing the bill.

In addition, the bill addresses Wisconsin's stray hold, which is effectively eight days – seven days plus the initial day of impoundment – making it the longest in the nation. It's always the priority of the Humane Society of Marathon County to get animals back to their homes, and we go to great lengths to reunite animals with their families including maintaining a database of lost and found pets reported to us; immediately photographing and sharing photos of lost dogs on our facebook page with over 11,000 followers who share; revising our website to show color photos of all lost cats that arrive in real time; and tracking down any and all leads we can to locate an owner once identified. It's important to remember that the bill lowers the minimum stray hold. Marathon County and other shelters can, and always will, hold animals longer when families need additional time to reunite with their pets – perhaps they're on vacation or experiencing an illness that makes it difficult for them to reclaim within the stray hold.

I've heard some people have worried that the shortened hold wouldn't provide enough time. That hasn't been my experience in Marathon County. In fact, nearly all of the animals in our shelter's care go home in the first four days of the stray hold, but all stray animals are held for the full eight days. We recently had an Amish fellow, with no internet technology, find his lost dog here and reclaim it by day 3. Like all shelters, we strive to get lost pets reunited with their owners. Our shelter has experienced a decrease in the number of lost dogs arriving here, due in part to the social media sites including garage sale postings and multiple facebook sites like Lost Dogs Of Wisconsin encouraging private citizens to hold found dogs and keep or rehome them outside of the designated shelter. Our experience shows that *many* people who file lost reports with us do not get their pets back because the animals do not come here in the first place. As a result, we are looking at every animal that comes in as having been a potential lost pet and advise people to keep checking our site as an increasing number of these animals are later surrendered by their new owners months later. Claiming that changing the hold time for lost pets in shelters will decrease the number of days for owners to find their

pets becomes less of a concern when more and more of the animals do not enter our shelter where people come to look, but are on a social media site while they are in someone's home.

SB 450 is a lifesaving bill is supported by progressive humane societies across the state. Please vote to pass SB 450 out of committee with *both the seizure and stray provisions* intact. This bill will save animals' lives, save taxpayer dollars, and bring Wisconsin law in line with other states.

Mary Kirlin
Executive Director
Humane Society of Marathon County
mary@catsndogs.org
www.catsndogs.org
IS 30:15

Members of the committee:

I am writing to you as a shelter veterinarian to urge you to please pass SB 450 out of committee with both the seized and stray animal provisions intact. For the past three and a half years I have worked at a private, non-profit animal shelter that has county contracts as a stray holding facility. During this time I have witnessed the ramifications of the current seven day stray-holding period first-hand and I am very excited about the potential for this law to change and increased life-saving capacity that could result.

As a shelter veterinarian my main goal is to save animal lives and get homeless animals ready to find their new homes. One of the biggest challenges to having this process move smoothly in the shelter is disease. Although I will admit that a small percentage of animals come in with pre-existing disease, by far the majority of animals start to show symptoms of disease once they have been at the shelter for several days. Cats in particular are extremely susceptible to stress and it is very common for me to see a cat arrive healthy, become stressed, stop eating and succumb to upper respiratory disease around the sixth, seventh or eighth day in the shelter. Research has proven in animals and humans alike that the immune system does not function well with increased levels of stress, so it is not surprising to see a correlation with increased incidence of disease.

A common scenario that I encounter every day are cats that have moderate to severe dental disease that require surgical intervention before they can be eligible to go to a new home. These cats are healthy on intake and we schedule the surgery for the day after the cat becomes our legal property. When we go to check that animal the morning of the scheduled surgery, usually the ninth day in the shelter, it is not eating, has nasal congestion, is lethargic and has clearly developed respiratory disease. Since it is unsafe to proceed with surgery on an animal in this condition, the cat is moved to a special ward for treatment and may spend anywhere from 7-21 extra days undergoing treatment before we can consider surgery again. At this point, not only has the animal's shelter stay doubled, tripled or worse, but we are also facing greatly increased costs to the shelter as we have to provide the extra housing, food, medications and staff time to provide all of this specialized care. It isn't hard to imagine that after all of this extra time and care it is impossible for the \$20 adoption fee to even make a dent in the actual cost to the shelter.

Even worse is the fact that this poor animal who could have been going into his new, low-stress home environment on day nine or ten is having to wait in the shelter, still in a stressful environment, battling disease and dealing with daily administration of medications as well. While I am lucky enough to work in a shelter where we will give this cat as much time as it needs to recover from its illness, there are still humane organizations in our state that do not have the resources to provide extensive care and time for these cases. A simple stress-induced "cold" can turn into a death sentence for some of these unfortunate animals.

Opponents of this bill may argue that this change will only allow shelters to euthanize more animals more quickly, but as a trained veterinary professional working in this field I am telling you that the reality of the situation is in fact the opposite. I would urge you to strongly consider my testimony as

well as that of my colleagues who are experiencing this reality every day and pass SB 450 out of committee with the seized and stray animal provisions intact.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Kuehl, DVM

Shelter Veterinarian

Maxim, Valirie

From: clodagh mc guinness <mcgnns@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 1:06 PM
To: Maxim, Valirie
Subject: Sb450

Dear Valirie,

I would like to testify that I am in favor of the new bill sb450 to shorten the stray hold for animals .

I personally do dog rescue and volunteer with a very large rescue and with MADACC itself .I will try and keep this short and to the point . I see first hand how this will help the animal itself and to be that is my#1 priority . I can see for selfish reasons the" what if case scenarios" that worry people but know my decision is based on the overall good for the animal population and not on a case scenario. Most animals as proven are claimed within 4 days, the others that are not are left in a kennel either waiting to be PTS or in most cases waiting to go to a shelter/ rescue . I have seen first hand the mental stress of 7 days in a cage, the confusion in their eyes, the loss of trust and the negative risk to their health . An injured or terrified animal has to remain 7 days by law.

This is common sense to have the animal released when the highest % is already claimed within the first 4 days .

Now I hear the argument about this affecting animals in the country if it were to go missing .

It Is the owners responsibility: if you notice your pet missing act on it . People argue lack of phones/ internet / transport to do this . In 2016 whomever does not have access to one of the above is choosing to live this way therefore we cannot have a law based on someone that lives off the grid . In that case walk to a neighbor and use one of the above .

If the animal does end up at a shelter I put my trust that these people will do their ultimate best for my pet/ the lost pet. I trust people in animal welfare as they are in the epicenter of all issues and have an intimate knowledge of what will work best . The ones that are not doing their job need reformation or termination .

I believe we need to work to build a greater network within communities and shelters to make sure pets are returned but as in the case of children we the pet owners are the #1 responsibility and must take charge when a pet gets lost. Too many animals are never claimed because of irresponsible owners that do not care to look for the animal . Why should these animals suffer because of people, it is our job to ensure stage two of their lives start as soon as possible to ensure the greatest outcome.

I sincerely hope with either outcome we can unite to work together to save more lives.

I support a shorter stray hold but also think we need to listen to the concerns of those against it and assuming it does pass as I wish, that we still work on these issues expressed to make sure as many pets are returned to their owner as possible.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely

Clodagh Mc Guinness

1200 s 73rd st

West Allis

WI 53214

Dear Senate committee members,

Please pass SB 450 out of committee with both the seized and stray animal provisions intact.

Without a doubt, this SB 450 will benefit ALL animals cared for by shelters in our state. Admittedly, it may change the ways that some shelters receive revenue. However, data from several shelters (large and small, urban and rural) in our state indicate that under this bill, unclaimed shelter animals will have the opportunity leave stray holding facilities sooner which will directly translate to lives and money saved.

The dynamics of cats and dogs moving in and out of shelters is quite different. There are virtually no adoptable dogs being euthanized in Wisconsin shelters, in large part because many more (the majority!) lost dogs are reclaimed by their owners, and many fewer are entering the shelters. On the flip side, shelters in Wisconsin are still struggling to deal with the massive influx of cats and kittens during "kitten season" (usually from about June through December); the sheer number of cats coming in to shelters often results in crowding (as shelters don't want to euthanize cats where it isn't medically or behaviorally indicated). Crowding results in stress and increased disease transmission, and this is what kills cats in our shelters. Repeated research studies have shown that one of the worst ways to try to reunite a lost cat with its owner is to take it into a shelter; once in a shelter, cats have about a 5-10% chance of being reclaimed (and if they are reclaimed, statistically it will be in less than 3 days after arriving to the shelter). The 90% of cats who aren't reclaimed must currently be held for 8 days (even an adorable 8 week old kitten with people lining up to adopt it who is almost certainly not a lost pet but a kitten born to an outside cat), which is just about the most perfectly designed time to expose them to a range of viral diseases. When they become ill they must stay even longer in the shelter's care, consuming space and resources from the shelter, putting other cats at risk, and they are at a significantly higher risk of death either due to the shelter needing to free up space or simply because they become too ill and must be euthanized for humane reasons.

Many of the opponents of this bill are focused on how the shorter stray hold will impact owners searching for their lost pets. While it may be true that some shelters are not doing enough on this front, holding animals for a longer required time in the shelter will only perpetuate those shelters' inability to develop useful systems for reuniting lost pets with their owners. Furthermore, many shelters have great systems in place to match reports of lost and found pets, so even if a shorter stray hold resulted in a pet being adopted or transferred out but later identified as a lost pet this is detectable and can be resolved. Additionally, those animals who need a little extra help medically or behaviorally to be adoptable will benefit tremendously because stray holding facilities will now have the opportunities to seek rescue opportunities 2 days sooner for animals they themselves may not have the resources to place, which directly translates to lives saved in both the source shelter and the receiving rescue organization. To my knowledge there are no shelters in Wisconsin that set time limits for the animals in their care; this bill only sets the minimum holding time, not the maximum. The most progressive shelters are working stridently and carefully to maintain their capacity for humane care, and this bill can only assist them.

There is no downside in AB 487 for the companion animals of Wisconsin or their caregivers. Some shelters will need to evaluate the details of their funding sources and stray holding contracts, but such tremendous opportunities come with the changes proposed by this bill, and I strongly encourage you to place your support behind it.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my thoughts, and I hope you will decide to support this bill..

Sincerely,

Becky Stuntebeck, DVM
Shelter Medicine Program
UW-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine

Linda Schultz

**Testimony in Support of 2015/16 Senate Bill 450
Senate Judiciary Committee, February 4, 2016**

Honorable Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 450.

As a resident of Wisconsin and someone who cares about animals, I'm in favor of SB 450, in its entirety. I love that, under this bill an animal seized from abusive conditions, will have the ability to quickly be treated for its conditions and released to humane societies or rescues that can get them in foster homes and adoptive homes. Cost savings to taxpayers are realized with shorter stays in animal control facilities, while life savings are realized by the animals.

I also love the part of this bill that reduces length of stray hold. It is already of record that 99% of reclaimed animals go home between the first and fourth day of their stay. Currently, much less fortunate are the unclaimed animals, paying the price of their long stay in stress and sickness, deteriorating both mentally and physically. I know there will be testimony requesting that the stray hold should not be reduced from 7 to 4 days, but, contrariwise, statistics have already proven that a longer stay does not mean more reclaiming from owners. Lost Dogs helps owners in distress when their dogs are on the loose. Shelter professionals, such as Dr. Sandra Newbury *Assistant Professor of Shelter Medicine at the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine and Chair of the Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Task Force*, Anne Reed, *President & CEO, Wisconsin Humane Society*, and Karen Sparapani, *Executive Director, MADACC*, to name a few, know what's best for stray animals, once animals arrive at animal control facilities. A longer stray hold has been proven that it does nothing to save lives, but has the opposite effect. The opponents have nothing to base their cries, "*that Wisconsin remains the state with the longest stray hold in the country, so owners have time to reclaim their pet*". The irony is that these same opponents quote statistics of no kill (90% live release) from the very shelters that have 3-5 day stray holds such as Austin TX and Kansas City MO. Wisconsin is trailing every state. 99% of the animals are staying longer in stray hold, than they should. Animals are paying a hefty price for those extra days, and the burden adds up on the taxpayer. That is not the kind of legislation that is good for Wisconsin and its animals. A longer stay means sicker animals and fewer adoptable animals due to sickness or behavior issues, as well as increased cost to taxpayers. A loss to all. Further confirmation that SB450 is good bill comes from The Best Friends Society support of this legislation, "*the state's mandatory stray-hold period will be reduced from seven to four days. Wisconsin has the longest such period in the country, and we know that a reduction in the stray holding period translates to a tremendous increase in the animals' chances of leaving the shelter alive. The data is clear on this issue: lower stray-holds will save lives.*"

With regards to an animal's stray hold period, I have two personal experiences I would like to share:

The first experience I'm sharing is about a stray dog, I found at my workplace, in Plymouth, this last October. He was a friendly, beautiful dog. (There is picture in attachment- #1) The only thing about him of worry was that he had quite a perceptible knot on his leg. I brought him to a local shelter on October 7th, 2015. The staff didn't think the leg caused him pain, so it didn't qualify for urgent triage. He wasn't reclaimed. His stray hold was up on fifteenth. It was only then that the small shelter could schedule x-

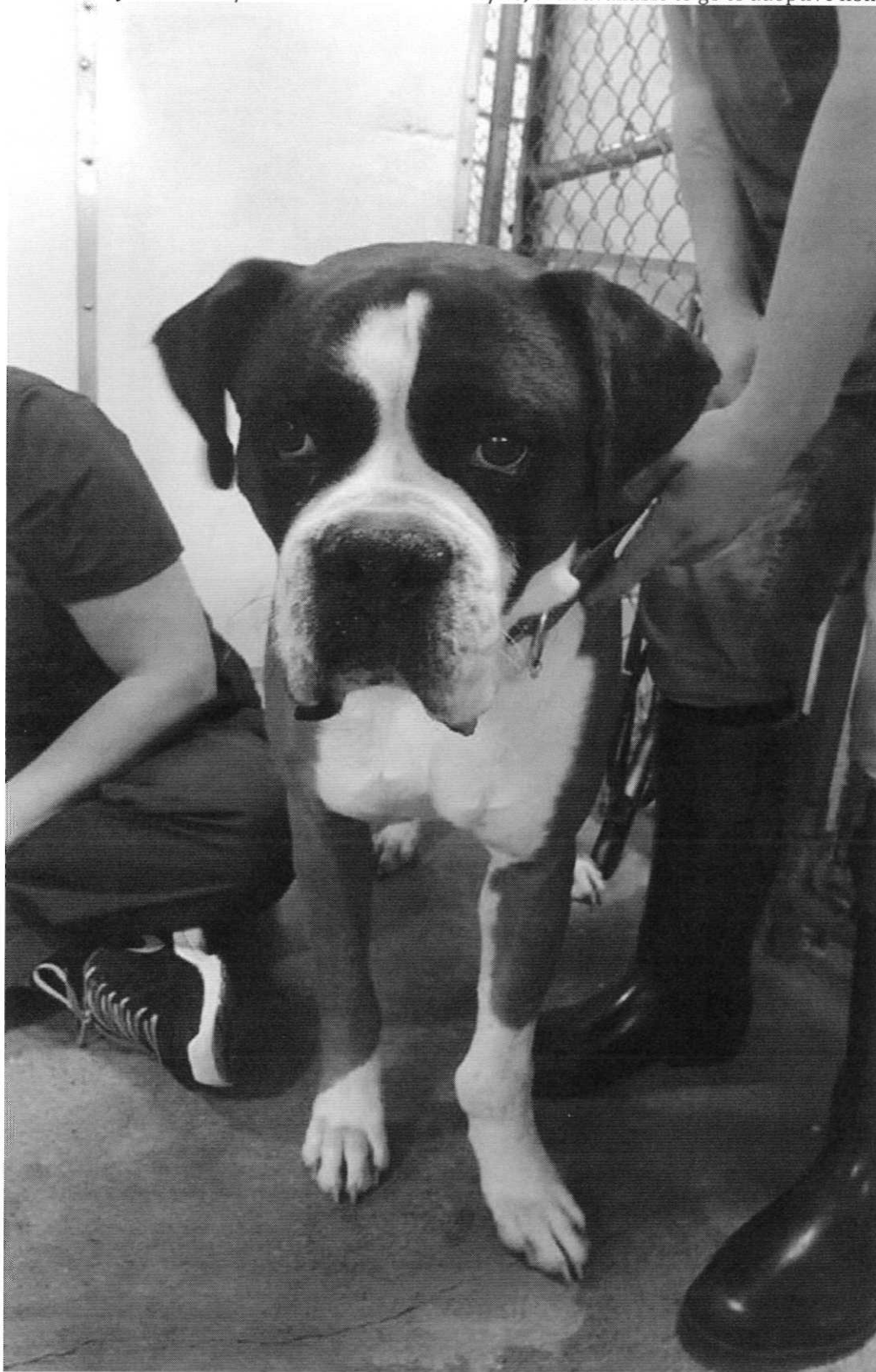
rays, and following the x-ray reading; were able to schedule his neuter. His shelter stay ended up being a total of three weeks after his admission. Since outside appointment scheduling is needed for all vetting, this example shows that animals, in small Wisconsin shelters, also struggle with the eight day stray hold. Meanwhile, the pet remains in a shelter environment an excessive amount of time, instead of in a home. There is no reason, that this highly adoptable dog should have spent three weeks in a kennel. When available for adoption, he had multiple applications in just a day's time.

The second experience I'd like to share is my own adoption, of a dog from a Boxer Rescue. (There is a picture in attachment #2) In September, my husband I saw his shelter intake picture posted by the Rescue, and immediately applied for adoption. We were so relieved that the rescue was able to pull Titan on his 4th day from the North Carolina shelter! He was emaciated and heartworm positive, his lungs were compromised. With lower immunity, he was too likely a candidate for life threatening complications if he had endured a long shelter stay. Strays arriving at our Wisconsin shelters are no different. They have been wandering outside, already exposed to parasites in scavenged food. They are domestic animals, whose bodies have been challenged by survival in the elements. It doesn't take much for them to succumb to sickness in our shelters.

SB 450 has been written with both the animal and taxpayer in mind. Please pass SB 450 out of committee with both the seized and stray animal provisions intact. SB 450 is the bill Wisconsin residents, shelters and animals have waiting for.

Linda Schultz
194 Knollwood Road
West Bend, WI 53095
414-531-8264

Attachment # 1 "Rootbeer" Date Found 10/7/15 Date Stray Hold Up: 10/15
Date of X Rays: Wk of 10/19 Date Neutered: Wk 10/26, then available to go to adoptive home



Attachment # 2 a) "Titan" pulled by rescue on 4th day of stray hold, on arrival at foster home



b) 4 wks after being in foster home



Tony DeStefanis

**Testimony in Support of 2015/16 Senate Bill 450
Senate Judiciary Committee
February 4, 2016**

Honorable Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I ask that you please pass SB 450 out of committee with both the seized and stray animal provisions intact.

First impressions may suggest that the extended 7 day stray hold, 8 days in practice, is beneficial for animals. As someone with extensive experience in rescue and fostering, I adamantly disagree. Statistics show that only 1% of animals who entered MADACC in 2014 were reclaimed on days five through seven. Preventing animals from leaving the shelter as quickly as possible increases stress, disease, and overcrowding. Diseases such as kennel cough and pneumonia, as well as, overcrowding are the leading causes of preventable euthanasia in shelters across the state such as MADACC. Simply put, reducing the legal stray hold from seven days to four days will save lives.

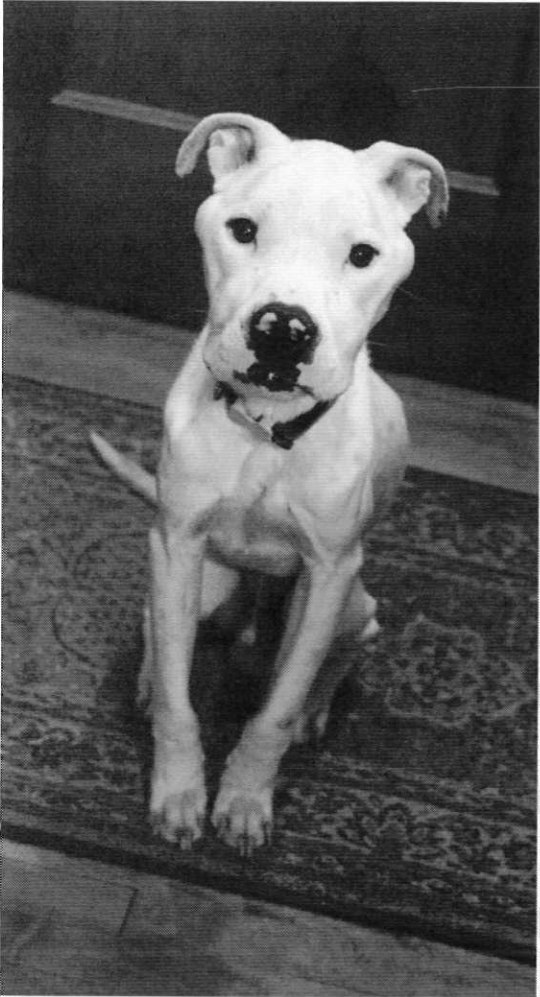
Please allow me to share my story that illustrates the negative impact that 3 extra days of stray hold can have on an animal. As a foster home in the Milwaukee area, I have always had a soft spot for dogs that have had a rough start. In October of 2012, I noticed a dog that was in the midst of his stray hold at MADACC; intake identification of A252694. I inquired if it was possible to foster this dog and was told I would have to wait until the legal stray hold expired on October 30th, 2012. On October 30th he was released to rescue and arrived to my house that same day. I immediately named him Jackson. Due to his condition, we visited the vet the next day to ensure the best care possible. During the next several days, despite his illness, he demonstrated how gentle and loving he was. On November 2nd, we returned to the vet again as Jackson began showing signs of pneumonia. He was having trouble sleeping, as well as, coughing up phlegm and difficulty breathing. What started as a case of kennel cough was worsening rapidly. In trying to fight the illness, we visited the vet daily over the next several days and on the 7th he had to be checked into the ER at Lakeshore Veterinary Specialists. Under advisement of the medical staff, Jackson never came home with me again after we made the very difficult decision to end his suffering. I will never forget those final moments of holding him close and telling him I loved him. I think of him often and regret that he had not been released from the shelter earlier, decreasing the chance of his catching disease. In the few days of his being with me I had already decided Jackson had found his home, I planned to adopt him. I never had that opportunity.

Jackson lost his opportunity at a second chance and I lost the opportunity to show him a better life. A five day stray hold is far more appropriate as it allows more than enough time for an owner to claim a lost pet, while increasing the odds that animals leave the shelter healthy to receive the second chance they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tony DeStefanis
4230 N Morris Blvd.
Milwaukee WI, 53211
(414)234-8674
tony.dest@att.net

Pictures of Jackson just after being released from Madacc.



Marisa Kraft

**Testimony in Support of 2015/16 Senate Bill 450
Senate Judiciary Committee
February 4, 2016**

Honorable Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 450. I support this bill in its entirety since it will enable more animals to leave Wisconsin shelters alive and healthy.

Upon first thought, it may seem that the longer the stray hold, the better for stray or lost animals. However, as someone with experience in rescuing dogs, I can assure you the opposite is true. Currently, an unclaimed animal is forced to spend 8 days in the shelter before he/she is eligible to leave with an adopter or rescue. That equates to 192 hours of being confined to his/her kennel with limited mental and physical enrichment, resulting in a very stressed animal. As I am sure you are aware, the immune system weakens during times of high stress, causing animals to be very susceptible to the upper respiratory infection ("kennel cough") that runs rampant in animal shelters. The sooner an animal can leave a shelter, the lower the risk of catching – and spreading - disease.

I would like to share a personal story that illustrates the negative impact that 3 extra days of stray hold can have on an animal. A few years ago, I was at Safe Harbor Humane Society in Racine, looking at adoptable dogs. As I walked through the kennels, a certain dog caught my eye. She was a brindle boxer/pitbull mix, and I could tell immediately from her bubbly nature that she would be a wonderful fit for my home. I inquired about her and found out she had been abandoned, left tied to a fence without food or water on a 98 degree July day. I stated I would like to adopt her, and was told she was on "day 5" of her stray hold, and I would need to wait the full 8 days before taking her home. When I returned to officially adopt Frannie 3 days later, she was a completely different dog. Just days before, she was an energetic young dog with a tail that wouldn't stop wagging, but now it was as if the life had been sucked out of her. She was coughing, sneezing, and completely drained. Upon leaving the shelter, I immediately took her to my vet who confirmed she was suffering from a bad upper respiratory infection. She was given antibiotics, and I was advised to closely monitor her breathing and food/water consumption. By the next day, Frannie's health had deteriorated even further. She wasn't eating or drinking and could no longer stand or walk. My husband and I made the decision to take her to the animal ER. Since she could not walk, we had to put her into a laundry basket in order to transport her. What started as "kennel cough" had quickly progressed into pneumonia. The ER vet told us that they would try everything they could, but they weren't sure if she would make it through the night. All I could think was if I had been able to take Frannie home the day I met her, we wouldn't be sitting at this ER being told that our new family member may not live. Frannie spent 3 days at the animal ER and incurred a bill of \$1300. Thankfully she lived, and thankfully we were able to pay the bill, but those extra 3 days of stray hold nearly cost Frannie her life.

Frannie is a dog who had been discarded like trash by her previous owners. She had a chance to have a bright future with a loving family, but she was almost robbed of that "happily ever after", all because of an unnecessarily long stray hold. A 5 day stray hold is much more appropriate as it allows more than enough time for an owner to claim a lost pet, while also ensuring that animals who are intentionally abandoned are able to leave the shelter healthy and receive the second chance they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill, which will positively impact the homeless animals of Wisconsin.

Marisa Kraft
15535 W Rogers Dr
New Berlin, WI 53151
414-801-3622

Frannie – Day 5 of stray hold at Safe Harbor Humane Society:



Frannie – 1 day post adoption. Moments before leaving for the animal ER:



Frannie – 1 month post adoption:



submitted testimony

Maxim, Valirie

From: GLAAS staff <adopt@glaas.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 6:38 PM
To: Maxim, Valirie
Cc: Jill Kline; Karen Sparapani
Subject: written testimony re:SB 450

Dear Committee Clerk, Valirie Maxim-

My name is Janine Rubeck and I am the Shelter Manager for the Green Lake Area Animal Shelter in Green Lake, Wisconsin.

The Green Lake Area Animal Shelter supports Assembly Bill 487 and Senate Bill 450, and we encourage you to do the same.

This bill will save animals' lives, tax dollars, and will bring Wisconsin in line with other states' stray animal holds.

Under the current law, animals seized for cruelty cases are held until the case is over, sometimes years, and then often euthanized. This bill allows victims of animal cruelty and court cases a chance at a much faster and more positive outcome.

Statistics show that the vast majority of stray animals who are reclaimed by their owners are reclaimed in the first 1-4 days. At GLAAS, this time is much shorter. Unclaimed stray animals can be placed for adoption or transferred out to other rescue organizations much sooner.

Much of the emphasis on the opposing side of this bill focuses on the fact that it might be harder for owners to find their lost pets. Our position at GLAAS is that regardless of where you stand on this legislation, there is no substitute for having your pet microchipped and keeping your contact information current. In the event your pet goes missing and turns up at an animal welfare organization, the Wisconsin stray hold time would have no impact because your pet is microchipped.

Historically at GLAAS, pets reclaimed are typically reclaimed within the first 48 hours. 196 pets have been reclaimed by their owners since 2010, with only four of these after day three. While we are a small shelter not likely to be as hugely affected by this change in legislation as larger organizations like MADACC, we strongly believe that as shelters, we are all in this together, and what helps one of us save more lives, ultimately, helps us all do the same.

We ask that you please pass SB 450 out of committee with both the seized and stray animal provisions intact.

Thank you.

Janine Rubeck

On behalf of the Board of Directors

Green Lake Area Animal Shelter

Maxim, Valirie

From: hall family <albre113@umn.edu>
Sent: Thursday, February 04, 2016 9:17 AM
To: Maxim, Valirie
Subject: In support of SB 450

Dear Valirie,

I am writing today in support of AB 487/SB 450 and would ask that you please distribute this testimony to the committee.

As someone who worked as a veterinary technician at Dane County Humane Society for 3.5 years, I have seen firsthand the effects that the long stray hold can have on the animals who come into the shelter. Long forced holds in shelters expose animals to stress and disease because they overcrowd the very shelters that are trying to help. The disease and stress caused by overcrowding can in turn cause unnecessary shelter deaths. Countless times, those of us who have worked in shelters have seen cats and dogs get sick with upper respiratory infection at the end of their stray period; because these animals now have to be treated for illness, the length and cost of their stay at the shelter increase. Reducing the length of the stray hold would allow these animals to be adopted before they get sick in the first place. This bill would also protect animals seized in cruelty/neglect or fighting cases from being held indefinitely as evidence while court cases are unresolved.

Given that the majority of the animals who are reclaimed by their owners go home within the first 2 days of being at the shelter, reducing the stray hold period would allow shelters to find homes for unclaimed animals sooner, thereby reducing the stress and illness that result from long shelter stays. This bill would also save taxpayer dollars and bring Wisconsin's laws in line with other states' laws.

Again, as someone who has seen firsthand how detrimental the long stray hold is for animals in the shelter environment, I urge you to please pass SB 450 out of committee with both the seized and stray animal provisions intact.

Sincerely,
Abbigail Hall, CVT
452 Village Green Lane W
Madison, WI 53704
albre113@umn.edu

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

The ASPCA has recently released a Position Statement on Responsibilities of Animal Shelters. We are very pleased that they have put a high emphasis on shelter transparency and proactively reuniting lost pets with their families.

Below are some excerpts from this Position Statement. Does your local shelter or stray holding facility do these things? We would like to see American shelters and stray holding meet these standards and feel that there is a need for legislation to enforce them. Please discuss these items with your state legislators and ask that they be mandated for all American shelters and stray holding facilities.

Goal 3: Owned animals are quickly and reliably returned to their owners

A. Shelters must check for ID, including microchips, tattoos, etc., at the time of intake. Checking animals for identification at the time of intake should be required by law of all animal shelters, public and private. The administrative burden associated with this requirement is minimal compared to the benefits of quickly reuniting animals with their owners. This requirement should be extended to owner-surrendered animals, as the information concerning ownership of a micro-chipped animal can confirm current ownership, shed light on possibility that other owners may exist, and must be updated regardless in the event of a subsequent adoption.

B. Shelters must serve notice to identified owners of stray animals, and the hold times for stray animals must account for mail delivery. Even in 2015, the U.S. Mail continues to represent the method by which many, if not most, people receive communications from local government, utility companies, financial institutions, the courts, etc. Thus, the mail represents a relatively reliable means of communication, and while other means of contacting owners are encouraged, shelters should be required to serve notice to identified owners by mail, regardless of other methods of communication that might be attempted. In order to provide owners with a meaningful opportunity to reclaim their animals, stray animal hold times should be of sufficient length to account for the additional time that notice by mail requires.

C. Shelters must provide public notice, appropriate to the community, of stray animals entering the shelter. Shelters have an obligation to give notice to the community of stray pets that enter their facilities in order to assist and facilitate the return of those pets to their owners. While online postings, whether on a shelter's website or other web platforms, have become commonplace, this may still not be feasible for all shelters. Thus, the form this notice should take may vary by community. Nevertheless, notice that is reasonably calculated to reach community members should be required of all shelters accepting stray animals.

D. Shelters must provide clear notice to the public concerning shelter locations, hours, fees and the return-to-owner process. The ASPCA strongly supports requiring the provision of this information to the public. Where possible, it should be available on a shelter's website, but certainly, information regarding fees and the return-to-owner process should be available in written form at the shelter itself.

E. Shelters must establish a reasonable process for matching stray animals admitted to the shelter with reports of lost pets received by the shelter from owners. The ASPCA supports a requirement that shelters establish and publicize a reasonable process for helping stray pets return to owners in search of them. The most effective approaches will include a process for monitoring lost pet reports for possible matches with stray animals admitted to the shelter. However, because the appearance of an animal may change significantly while lost, or information provided in lost pet reports may be incomplete or inaccurate, the ASPCA believes that shelters should provide clear notice to owners searching for their lost pets that there is no substitute for visiting the shelter in person.

F. Shelters must be accessible to the public during reasonable hours for the return-to owner process. The ASPCA supports a requirement that shelters be accessible during reasonable hours to owners seeking to reclaim their pet. These hours should include some reasonable additional period of time beyond the typical workday (e.g. 9am to 5pm Monday through Friday) so that pet owners who may not have flexible work schedules have the best opportunity to reclaim their pets. What constitutes "reasonable" access depends on factors including the length of the hold period, the nature of the community, e.g., urban, suburban, rural, and the resources of the shelter.

G. Shelters should be authorized and encouraged to reduce or waive redemption fees. For the reasons discussed above in relation to adoption and placement, the ASPCA supports the granting of specific authorization for shelters to reduce or waive fees to owners seeking to reclaim their pets and encourages shelters to regularly and consistently use this tool to reunite more pets with their families.

H. Return-to-owner from the field should be expressly authorized. The ASPCA strongly supports legal authorization of return-to-owner from the field for animals with identification. This practice not only reduces burdens on shelters, but it straightforwardly accomplishes the goal of quick and reliable return.