



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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22 Feb 25

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: LD 498 Resolve, to Improve Standards for Animal Rescue Entities

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pleucker and members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee,

1. Thank you for allowing me to introduce to you my bill, LD 498, a Resolve, To Improve Standards for Animal Rescue Entities. I propose this Resolve on behalf a constituent, Mr Charles Schaffer, with whom I have been long acquainted.
2. As some of you are aware, the State of Maine has some of the most stringent neuter/spay laws in the nation. We require that all animals adopted out of an animal shelter be neutered or spayed before they are eligible to go to their new home. In addition, Maine has strict laws that have all but ended the practice of operating 'puppy mills'. While both of these are generally good things, it has created a shortage of dogs for adoption by certain preferred breeds, even while our humane shelters have dogs available for adoption.
3. This has led to the practice of dogs of certain desirable breed being brought to Maine from other states and even other countries. These dogs, often brought in from overcrowded and underfunded rescue shelters from other areas, are brought to private non-profit organizations in the State of Maine operated as 'animal rescues'.
4. At times, these animal rescue operations are operated by people with more good intentions and caring than experience, adequate resources or proper facilities.
5. While I am not an animal control officer, I was a law enforcement officer who had received additional training in large animal handling and rescue in an effort to assist our county emergency management agency. During my training, I received basic training on the basic standards of animal care. Additionally, as a law enforcement officer, I had responded to numerous calls where I had encountered animals that were kept in a state of neglect and I fully understand the detrimental consequences that an animal can suffer when not properly cared for.

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6. In my county, I am aware of at least one animal rescue shelter, operated as a private non-profit, where the operator has on numerous occasions put out a call for assistance because they did not have the funds to acquire adequate food for the animals in their care. I went to their facility to see what I could provide for assistance and when I arrived there was nobody there, but upon a cursory inspection I observed conditions that I felt, based on my training and experience, were not adequate for the amount of dogs present. It also made me question, based on the observed lack of facilities and assumed lack of food, if the organization had the proper resources to ensure that the dogs had the proper immunizations and medical care.

7. While there, I saw that all of the dogs were in a common area and observed their social behavior. While I am not an expert in canine behavior, I live on a farm complex with multiple family members all who have dogs, many of them hunting dogs, all of who are well socialized to each other. The behavior I observed at this facility was not of well socialized dogs, but rather of animals who appeared to be aggressive. That raised an additional concern that all of these animals might be available for either adoption or fostering.

8. I believe that the disparity between such private animal rescue operations and the professional operations of the local humane societies that I have worked with can be quite striking. And while I am sure that some of these animal rescue entities are operated with more care and attention to detail than others, it is likely that there are rescue shelters that are worse than the one I observed. I believe it would behoove us to establish common sense and minimally intrusive standards in training, operational procedures, accountability and standards of animal welfare.

9. I thank you in advance for your consideration of this matter and I would ask the committee to consider the further testimony of Mr. Schaffer when considering this matter.

Respectfully,



Rep. Chad R. Perkins
District 31

CF:
Senator Ingwersen
Representative Pleucker
Committee Members

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