February 5, 2019

**STATEMENT SUPPORTING REMOVING COLLECTION OF SALES TAX**

My name is Gerald Woodley. I have served on the Board of Directors for two animal rescues. The first was the Brown County Humane Society in New Ulm, where I was the Chair of the Board of Directors. Brown County was a traditional humane society with a building which housed dogs and cats in kennels and roaming rooms (cats). The second is the Mending Spirits Animal Rescue in Mankato, where I am currently serving as the Fundraising Coordinator on the Board of Directors. Mending Spirits does not have a building since all the animals stay in foster homes until adopted. Both Brown County and Mending Spirits are all-volunteer organizations. There are no paid positions in either organization.

I support removing the requirement that humane societies collect sales taxes on adoptions. There are primarily three reasons for my support.

1. Many humane societies and animal rescues, especially in rural areas, consist of volunteers who do so because they were attracted to the organization because of their love of animals and the desire to save as many potential pets as possible. They are not tax or financial experts. Many have difficulty finding someone to take on the role of treasurer. At Brown County we needed to find a new treasurer on two separate occasions and it was a difficult process. Having the added responsibility of working with sales tax puts an additional road block in front of humane societies, especially those relying on volunteer help, to find a willing volunteer. Also, financial restraints of having to operate with adoption fees, as well as donations from businesses and the public make it difficult to hire a treasurer or tax expert to work with the organization’s sales taxes.
2. The responsibility of collecting and submitting the sales taxes is a time consuming process for the organization—time that could be better spent in direct care of the animals or in raising funds for their care. Depending on the amount of revenue collected from adoptions, the sales taxes must be submitted to the State of Minnesota either on a monthly or quarterly basis. The treasurer must submit an online form each time the organization has to submit their taxes. It is a stressful and time consuming activity for a volunteer who likely would be more comfortable in dealing directly with animal care and adoptions. They no longer would have to worry about having to make sure things are completed and paid on time.
3. The payment of sales taxes could possibly be a deterrent to a potential adopter, especially a low income individual. Many studies, for example, have shown the mental and physical health benefits of pet ownership for the elderly and other people who are on a fixed income, and who might find the additional burden of paying sales tax a road block to their adoption of a companion animal that could aid them both mentally and physically.

My retirement years have been greatly enriched by my volunteering in the world of animal rescue. It is my desire that the animal rescue I am now directly involved with and other animal rescues are able to make the maximum use of their time in the raising of funds, caring for the abandoned animals, and making sure the animals go into good homes that will be caring and loving. Time is an important resource for volunteers in the world of animal rescue. The collection and payment of sales taxes takes away both the time and energy that could be used for the caring of the animals.

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