

Emily Aslesen, DVM
Kim Culbertson, DVM
Madeleine Little, DVM

February 13, 2022

RE: Support of House File 208, Companion Animal Board bill

To Whom It May Concern,

Our names are Dr. Emily Aslesen, Dr. Kim Culbertson, and Dr. Madeleine Little. We are Minnesota-licensed veterinarians who work at a high-quality, high-volume spay/neuter clinic serving low-income clients who would otherwise have limited access to veterinary care. Our nonprofit clinic is based out of Minneapolis but serves clients from around the state year-round via our mobile surgery unit. We also make several annual trips to remote parts of the state to serve Native American reservations and small communities with limited veterinary services. We perform surgeries on owned dogs, cats, and rabbits, and also spay and neuter free-roaming community cats as well as animals from a large number of rescue partners.

We are writing to state our wholehearted support for the Companion Animal Board (CAB) Bill (House File 208 and Senate File 73). There is currently no state agency in charge of advocating for the specific needs of companion animals and providing the education, services and resources necessary for owners and nonprofit organizations to provide the best care possible for pets. The grant-making ability of the CAB is particularly exciting to us, as we personally see thousands of Minnesota pet owners each year struggling to access and pay for basic veterinary care for the pets they consider part of their families.

We also strongly support transferring the enforcement of the Dog and Cat Breeder Law and the Kennel and Dealer Law to the Companion Animal Board. The Board of Animal Health failed to establish rules for the breeder law; the CAB will have the opportunity to fulfill this duty. Dog and cat breeding facilities and shelters should provide for the physical, mental and social wellbeing of their animals. This is critical to prevent irresponsible and unethical breeding, particularly in puppy mills, and to provide basic standards for things like cage space, flooring, exercise opportunities and veterinary care.

Every day we see dozens of pets and pet owners whose lives may change for the better with the formation of a Companion Animal Board. Our low-income clients and rescue partners want to do right by the dogs and cats in their care but have limited means to do so, especially in the face of pet overpopulation. The CAB could provide direct assistance to nonprofit veterinary clinics like ours and to the people and animals we serve. We strongly urge your support of the Companion Animal Board Bill.

Thank you,

Emily Aslesen, DVM
Kim Culbertson, DVM
Madeleine Little, DVM