



**HB20-1084 Humane Pet Act | Sections 3(2)(a,d,e,f)
Requirements for Dog and Cat Breeders and Sellers**

To: Colorado House Rural Affairs & Agriculture Committee
From: Jaclyn M. Christakos, DVM, CVMA President-elect
Date: February 3, 2020

POSITION: OPPOSED

Thank you, Mr. Chair. My name is Dr. Jackie Christakos, and I am the President-elect of the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today concerning CVMA's opposition to HB20-1084.

Let me begin by stating that CVMA supports the principle that Coloradans be able to adopt or purchase healthy, safe pets. CVMA also supports Colorado's Pet Animal Care Facilities Act, and we appreciate what its 42 pages of regulations do to protect animal health and welfare in our state.

CVMA opposes four parts of this bill as drafted, and with the proposed amendments that we have seen. The four parts are on pages 6 and 7, Section 3, number 2, a, d, e, and f.

First, Page 6, Section 3, Number 2(a)

CVMA opposes limiting breeders to only twenty-five breeding dogs or cats. This requirement has no basis in scientific research or veterinary medicine. Quality of care is the factor that is essential to the health and welfare of the animals, not the number of animals housed at a particular facility.

Second, Page 7, Section 3, Number 2(d)

The amended requirement to breed an animal no more than six times in her life is not based in science or veterinary medicine. This is a decision that should be made in consultation between a veterinarian and an owner for each individual animal, and in consideration of that animal's health and welfare. Some animals should have only one litter, and others can have more and remain healthy. This is a decision that is best determined for each individual animal.

Third, Page 7, Section 3, number 2(e)

CVMA is opposed to the requirements for veterinarians to document that an animal

- is in suitable health for breeding;
- has no health conditions that could affect the offspring

This seems to require veterinarians to certify certain breeding outcomes or to rule out other outcomes. Unfortunately, that is not possible.

Given today's scientific and veterinary medical knowledge, veterinarians can perform good physical examinations, consult with owners and give opinions that an animal is apparently healthy. Apparently healthy. No matter how healthy they look to us now, there is no guarantee that there won't be breeding, genetic, developmental or birthing complications or issues down the line. There are no guarantees in animal health or

human health. This requirement puts an expectation on veterinarians that goes beyond what the science supports.

Veterinary genetic testing is done at a number of universities, Cornell, University of Missouri, University of Minnesota, University of California at Davis, and Washington State University. Some conditions can be identified through genetic testing, and other conditions are caused by a complex of genetic conditions. We cannot rule out every genetic condition that might come up.

Education is the key here. It is the role of the veterinarian to bring information and knowledge to owners to make good decisions about animal health and welfare. The current PACFA Rule 15.1 requires licensees to have an ongoing relationship with a veterinarian, which goes a long way toward protecting animal health and welfare.

Fourth, Page 7, Section 3, number 2(f)

CVMA is opposed to this stipulation that a veterinarian determine and document that an animal requires euthanasia. It is not the role of the veterinarian to make this determination. Within the context of the veterinarian-client-patient relationship, the role of a veterinarian is to advise the owner or client on the health and welfare of the animal.

Veterinarians advocate on behalf of the animal patient and partner with the owner in the best interests of the animal's health and welfare. It is the role of the OWNER to make euthanasia decisions. The final decision does not belong to the veterinarian.

In closing, CVMA is very much in favor of healthy breeding practices. We cannot support this bill as drafted and with the proposed amendments we have seen. We recommend postponing this bill and engaging stakeholders in an effort to make PACFA even more effective for the citizens of Colorado.

Comments or Questions: Leo Boyle, CVMA Lobbyist, 303.377.5469.