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October 30, 2019

Senator Peter Lucido
Chair, Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
Michigan Senate

Via email: Jackie Mosher, Committee Clerk, OfcSMCC@senate.michigan.gov and jmosher@senate.michigan.gov

Re: Support with Recommendations SB 352, Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee Meeting, October 31, 2019

Dear Sen. Lucido and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information to the committee. Attorneys for Animals, Inc. (AFA) is a Michigan non-profit and 501(c)(3) organization of legal professionals and animal advocates. The organization's Board of Directors voted to **support SB 352, but with recommendations for amendments.**

SB 352 would make Child Protective Services (CPS) workers mandatory reporters of animal abuse if, in the course of investigating suspected child abuse or neglect, they had reasonable cause to suspect animal abuse or neglect. It prescribes criminal penalties; violations can in certain cases be felonies.

This bill recognizes what many in the animal advocacy and social services professions know all too well: that empirical studies over the past several decades establish the relationship between animal abuse and other violence, such as child abuse, elder abuse and domestic violence. This is commonly referred to as The Link[®].

We fully support the premise of this bill but it will be stronger and better accomplish its purposes of making both animals and people safer, with the following two amendments:

- Expand the reporting requirements to Adult Protective Services workers who, like the CPS workers are in a position to observe suspected animal abuse in the course of investigating abuse or neglect of adultsⁱⁱ.
- Omit the criminal penalties, which are draconian and will discourage cooperation of needed allies and stakeholders in getting the bill passed and, once passed, in ensuring meaningful compliance.

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Along with colleagues from the National Association of Social Workers – Michigan Chapter, and the Animal Welfare Institute, AFA has discussed these concerns and provided language to address them. We continue to be available to the sponsor.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beatrice M. Friedlander".

Beatrice M. Friedlander, JD
President

ⁱ <http://nationallinkcoalition.org/what-is-the-link>

ⁱⁱ SB 439 extends the requirement to licensed veterinarians