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June 5, 2023

Senator Sue Shink
Chair, Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee
Michigan Legislature

Via email, Elena Palombo, ofcsc@senate.michigan.gov

**Re: Support SBs 148 and 149, Senate Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee Meeting,
June 6, 2023**

Dear Senators Shink, Polehanki, Hertel and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Attorneys for Animals, Inc. (AFA) is a Michigan nonprofit and 501(c)(3) organization of legal professionals and animal advocates. The organization's Board of Directors voted to support these bills which provide a long-awaited and much delayed opportunity to allow a "happy ending" for dogs and cats who have served as research subjects.

They also present an opportunity for the Legislature, on behalf of Michiganders, to weigh in on an issue that generally is left to federal government regulation under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), 7 USC 2131 *et seq.* The AWA takes control away from the states to regulate animals in research settings by setting the minimum standards for treatment of these animals and by delegating enforcement to the USDA.

There is a significant gap in the current system. Despite federal reporting requirements at the beginning of an experiment which chronicle an animal's origin as well as the level of pain they will experience during any given test, there is no federally codified provision in place to account for a lab animal's fate after experimentation has ended, let alone provide for their safety, comfort and wellbeing.

Further, states retain authority to determine what happens to the animals after research is completed. With the passage of these bills, Michigan would join 15 states that have adopted this approach: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia and Washington.

Of note, in 2022 over two hundred beagles rescued from a laboratory breeding facility in Virginia were quickly adopted into new homes throughout Michigan. The sad reality, however, is that dogs and cats living and dying in Michigan laboratories are not being given the same opportunity.

Teddy the beagle for whom these bills are named, and other animals like him in Michigan, are only alive today thanks to undercover investigations and an abundance of public outrage. What about the

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dogs and cats who die quietly out of the public eye? There are Michigan families looking to adopt these animals and there are animals in Michigan laboratories waiting for adoption. Teddy's Law would break down the barriers that result in their needless death and provide a pathway to a second chance at life.

Just this past weekend our organization was tabling at an event. A woman stopped by our booth and said she had adopted a 7 month old beagle from the Midland Humane Society last fall. She had applied at two other shelters. She wanted to give one of these dogs a home especially since her beagle had died earlier last year.

The role that Michigan animal control and animal protection shelters play is crucial and will provide the best opportunity for the animals to be placed into secure, loving and permanent homes. The professional and committed people who work and volunteer at our state's shelters have the expertise to ensure that the dogs and cats released to them are given necessary medical attention and are well socialized before being put up for adoption. Importantly, we can rely on their judgment to screen potential adopters (and there are likely to be many who appreciate the opportunity to give a second chance to animals used in research) and find the best home for these special animals.

This bill has been introduced in the past two legislative sessions. The reporting requirements in SB 149 are pared down from the initial version. The reporting component is important because it provides some transparency to Michigan citizens about the number of cats and dogs – who most people regard as companions if not family members – who are able to begin a new life after being used in research.

The bills you are considering are drafted with a specific and narrow focus. That does not mean they are not important. They will make a significant difference to the animals given a second chance, and to the loving families who adopt them.

We urge you to report these bills from committee.

Very Truly Yours,

Molly Tamulevich
Board Member

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President

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