

November 2, 2023

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chair
Senate Agriculture Committee

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson
Chair
House Agriculture Committee

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member
Senate Agriculture Committee

The Honorable David Scott
Ranking Member
House Agriculture Committee

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, Chairman Thompson, and Ranking Member Scott:

The undersigned organizations respectfully urge you to support the Providing for Unhoused People with Pets (PUPP) Act (H.R. 3957) and to include its full text in the 2023 Farm Bill. By providing better accommodations for people experiencing homelessness who have pets, the PUPP Act will help remove a common barrier to shelter and services for vulnerable veterans, individuals, and families who gain strength from their companion animals.

Pets play a pivotal role in the lives of their human caregivers, regardless of their income level or housing situation. Pets have public health benefits at nearly every stage of life, including lower blood pressure, lower risk of heart disease, reduced stress levels, decreased anxiety and depression, strengthened immune systems, and increased physical activity. Animals can be especially important companions for people experiencing housing instability. Studies have shown that people experiencing homelessness report that their pets provide a sense of responsibility and are a reason to live, reduce substance use, and seek healthcare.

In 2022, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) counted over 582,000 Americans experiencing homelessness, including sheltered and unsheltered individuals. An estimated 12% of people experiencing homelessness have pets. Currently, most emergency shelters do not accept pets – forcing individuals experiencing homelessness to choose between access to shelter and essential services or keeping their beloved pets. In most cases, individuals will refuse assistance and shelter if it comes with the condition of giving up a beloved pet. This scenario harms individuals’ wellbeing and contributes to the cycle of chronic homelessness.

The PUPP Act offers a solution by creating a grant program – operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in consultation with HUD – to provide funds to eligible entities, enabling emergency shelters to make the necessary changes to accommodate unhoused individuals with pets, including providing basic veterinary services. The program is modeled on the highly successful California Pet Assistance and Support Program. Over two grant cycles, the state of California has allocated \$15 million in small grants to nonprofit shelter operators to retrofit their facilities to accommodate pets. Both cycles were oversubscribed two to one, demonstrating the great interest and need for such accommodations. Feedback from grantees demonstrated that the investments allow the facilities to not just provide the necessary retrofitting, but also to provide support to both the owners and pets to ensure the long-term success of each in permanent

housing. The California model demonstrates that a relatively modest amount of investment can make a big difference in the lives of those experiencing emergency housing needs, and ultimately save lives.

Thank you for considering this request. Enactment of the PUPP Act can help improve the lives of an estimated 70,000 Americans annually, who would benefit greatly from access to emergency shelter, services, and a road to permanent housing, while being able to remain with their companion animals.

Sincerely,

ACCT Philly

Adopt Ohio

All About Animals Rescue

American Pets Alive!

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)

Animal Allies

Animal Care Centers of NYC

Animal Folks

Animal Legal Defense Fund

Animal Protection League of New Jersey

Animal Protective Foundation

Animal Umbrella

Animal Welfare Institute

Animal Welfare League of Arlington

Annie and Millie's Place

Arizona Humane Society

Arizona Pet Project

Associated Humane Societies

Attorneys for Animals

Berks Coalition to End Homelessness

Best Friends Animal Society

Broome County Humane Society

Burlington County Animal Alliance

Cape May County Animal Shelter and Adoption Center

Cleveland Animal Protective League

Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

Colorado Voters for Animals

Companion Animal Advocates-New Jersey

Deeds Not Words

Deep Roots, Inc., of Maryland

Dog Advocacy and Rescue

Downtown Dog Rescue

Dumb Friends League

Father Joe's Villages

Feeding Pets of the Homeless

Flagler Humane Society

Florida Animal Control Association DBA Florida Animal Protection & Advocacy Association

Florida Association of Animal Welfare Organizations

Found House Interfaith Housing Network
Frankie's Friends
Friends of Animals United NY/NY
Friends of the Burlington County Animal Shelter
Gang of Good
Georgia Pet Coalition
Happy Homes Animal Rescue-Old Bridge
HEART LA
Hero's Heart
Homeward Bound Pet Adoption Center
Hope the Mission
Human Animal Support Services
Humane Montclair
Humane Society for Southwest Washington
Humane Society Legislative Fund
Humane Society Naples
Humane Society of the Treasure Coast
Humane Society of the United States
Humane Society Tampa Bay
Institute for Human-Animal Connection
Kane's Crusade, Inc.
League of Humane Voters-New Jersey
Lesniak Institute for American Leadership at Kean University
Ludar Animal Behavior and Consulting
Making A Difference Now
Michelson Center for Public Policy
Michigan Humane
Michigan State Bar Animal Law Section*
Monmouth County SPCA
Monroe County Humane Association
MSPCA
My Dog Is My Home
My Pit Bull is Family
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Coalition for the Homeless
New York Disaster Interfaith Services
Ohio Animal Advocates
Oregon Spay/Neuter Fund
Partners in Animal Welfare
PATH
Pathways to Housing PA
People for Animals, Inc.
Project Street Vet
RedRover
Remedios Cate Rescue, Inc.
Retraining the Village
Sammy's Hope Animal Welfare and Adoption Center
San Francisco SPCA
Social Compassion in Legislation
Spay Oregon
Stray Cat Relief Fund

Street Dogz
Texas Humane Legislation Network
The Salvation Army Orange County
The Street Dog Coalition
Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry
Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth
United Spay Alliance
Urban Resource Institute
Volunteer Ministry Center
Voters for Animal Rights
Wyoming Coalition for Animal Protection

**The Animal Law Section is a voluntary membership section of the State Bar of Michigan, comprised of 272 members. The Animal Law Section is not the State Bar of Michigan and the position expressed herein is that of the Animal Law Section only and not the State Bar of Michigan. To date, the State Bar does not have a position on this item. The Animal Law Section has a public policy decision-making body with 15 members. On August 16, 2023, the Section adopted its position after an electronic discussion and vote. 13 members voted in favor of the Section's position, 0 members voted against this position, 0 members abstained, 2 members did not vote.*