



JOHN SPIROS

State Representative • 86th Assembly District

Assembly Bill 487

January 13, 2015

Testimony from Rep. Spiros

Good afternoon and thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety for allowing me to have the opportunity to talk to you today regarding Assembly Bill 487, a bill concerning the custody, care, and treatment of animals that have been subject to abuse and neglect.

The State of Wisconsin is behind the curve when it comes to the seizure and outcomes of animals that are taken into custody as victims of cruelty, abuse, and neglect, including dogs forced to participate in the barbaric “sport” of dog fighting. For example, when dozens of animals are rescued from a home in cases of neglect or abuse, or as a result of dog fighting, these animals are treated as evidence and are held in public and private shelters until the investigation is completed and the court case has resolved. This can mean years of confinement in crowded shelters, as well as additional costs to local governments and taxpayers.

As there is no provision for expedient resolution under current law, these animals can be held for several years as the case moves through the courts. In addition, current law does not require the owners of the animals to be financially responsible for their care while cases are pending. This puts the burden on both public and private animal welfare organizations to care for a sometimes large numbers of animals for years on end, ultimately costing a lot of time and money for these shelters and the taxpayers.

Earlier this year I visited one of these shelters, Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission, and saw firsthand the problems these shelters were dealing with. It is time to create more humane legislation that not only expediently moves animals through shelter systems where warranted, but holds owners of these animals responsible for the care of these animals. I believe that living animals should not be treated as traditional evidence.

The proposed legislation places the burden on the owner of the animals to pay the costs currently paid by public shelters, who have little expectation of restitution. The bill expedites the process to rehabilitate and adopt out animals otherwise held in an indefinite judicial limbo. Therefore instead of being held until a court case has been resolved, under the bill animals could be rehabilitated and/or adopted out a lot sooner. This bill would also allow the animal to be returned to the owner in a timelier manner if it is found that the animal was not involved in any crime.

This bill will also have the effect of saving animals lives. For example, under current law if a dog is found to have been involved in dog-fighting, that dog would be automatically euthanized if it is older than 1 year. This bill allows for a process to determine if that animal can be rehabilitated.

Another component of the bill is relating to stray hold times in Wisconsin. This bill would shorten the required time a shelter must hold an animal before it is able to undergo the process of rehoming or adoption from 7 days to 4 days. In practice this bill allows shelters to find homes for safe and healthy animals on the animal's sixth day in the shelter, after the animal is held for a four day stray hold, plus the day of initial impoundment. Currently, animals must be held for a seven day stray hold under Wisconsin law – eight days in practice. As Wisconsin has the longest stray-hold time in the country, this measure would put us nearer the national average and improve outcomes of stray animals in Wisconsin. Long stray holds don't help a significantly higher number of animals get home. The majority of "lost" animals that come to a shelter are reunited with their families on days one through four of the state stray hold. For example at Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission only 1% of animals were reclaimed on days five through seven of the stray hold. Long stray holds also have the consequence of making more animals sick because they overcrowd shelters, and illness and overcrowding cause unnecessary shelter deaths.

I was able to hear from the Humane Society in Minnesota, where shelters located near the state border that is required to hold dogs from Minnesota for a minimum of 5 days, per Minnesota state law, and dogs from Wisconsin for a minimum of 7 days, per our state law. The shelter confirmed they see no difference in the reclaim rate of animals between the two states, and just as high a percentage of animals are able to make it home in the shorter time period required by Minnesota state law.

This bill is supported by the Wisconsin Humane Society and shelters from across Wisconsin. There will be additional testimony today from individuals who work in these shelters to explain why this bill is needed and how it will save animals lives. This bill is also supported by law enforcement officials as well as those who deal with prosecuting these types of crimes.

I introduced Assembly Amendment 1, which made some technical changes to the bill, suggested by the Legislative Reference Bureau.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of this bill, and I would welcome any questions.

Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Committee Hearing Testimony for AB487/SB450
January 13, 2016

Good afternoon representatives,
My name is Renee Benell. Thank you hearing testimony on this AB487. I'm here today in support of the bill and am asking you to pass it through the committee with both the seizure and stray provisions intact.

I worked at an open admissions shelter in Ann Arbor, Michigan for about seven years. In Michigan, stray dogs and cats with identification were held for seven days. Those without identification were held for four days. During that time I witnessed much of what you'll hear from other speakers today in support of this bill. But essentially what I observed is the faster we could move animals through our system, the better for all.

I'm originally from Wisconsin and moved back to work at an open admissions shelter here. I soon became well aware of the detriments that the longer stray period had on the animals, the staff, and overall operations. Animals are creatures of habit. Living in captivity can be incredibly detrimental. I'd encourage you to think about how your pet would handle being housed in a cage or kennel in a foreign environment over several days, weeks or months.

In most lines of business we generally see products or patients through a system in a timely manner. Think of produce at a grocery store, seasonal clothing items in a department store, or patients in a hospital. Too much will log-jam the system and hinder a flow of operations. My fiancé happens to have a degree in business & supply chain management and it's all about making sure inputs are outputs are flowing at an optimum pace. It was difficult for me to accept this long hold period in Wisconsin and I was so encouraged when I heard some legislation was being introduced to make some changes.

I'd also like to touch on the hardships that animal care workers experience. A term called compassion fatigue can generally be used when referring to

the distress that comes with continually caring for others who are traumatized or suffering. Some studies are suggesting that animal care workers are a group more vulnerable to this than others (such as police, firefighters, paramedics, etc.). Compassion fatigue can have similar effects to PTSD.

Animal shelter work is not glamorous nor does it pay well. People do the job because they want to make a difference for animals, but their body, mind, and spirit can suffer. I ask you to think about the fact that there are human beings who have to care for the hundreds of thousands of animals who end up in the over 200 animals shelters/rescues around our state. I would argue that humans are born with empathy and compassion, so when we not only see, but also care for the abused and neglected, it takes a toll on us. The reason I'm telling you this is because the topic we're discussing today doesn't just affect animals – it also affects the hard working people trying to help them. I believe that a shorter hold period leads to a healthier environment for the care-takers.

I know that change can be hard, but I've seen a lot of great change in the last decade! I know that the folks who came here today to testify all care about the well-being of animals. What I'd like to summarize with my background is that organizations in other states with shorter holds are successful with their return to owner rates, adoption rates and more. People and entities can and will adapt to change.

Another point is that this bill is simply addressing circumstances for animals who DO end up in animal shelters. I see it as a completely separate topic than addressing when animals MIGHT end up in shelters. There are other things that can be done to help combat and prevent stray animal issues now and I'd encourage us all to do more regardless of the outcome of this bill.

1. Actively promote low-cost microchipping. Microchips are about the size of grain of rice and can easily be implanted by a technician or veterinarian. They are also inexpensive when purchased from a distributor. However, they consistently have very high margins or

not offered. We need more private practice veterinarians to be advocates for microchips and offer them at lower prices.

Whole Pet: \$45

Country View: \$56.25

Fitchburg Veterinary Hospital: \$61 + \$41 exam

Arbor Ridge Pet Clinic: \$21 + \$51.95 exam for new clients

Lakeview Veterinary Clinic: \$40

HSSW: \$30

Angel's Wish: \$20

DCHS special rate: \$15

2. We need more organizations to offer low cost or free micro-chipping in underserved communities. Many pet owners don't have the resources to go to a regular vet or afford microchipping. Again, the organization I worked at in Michigan would hold low-cost vaccine/microchip clinics to the public on a regular basis. We'd also go out into the community to do this at fire stations, pet stores, etc. Dane County Humane Society does this with discounted and/or donated microchips.
3. We need municipalities to promote micro-chipping! This can be advertised in conjunction with license renewals or at local events where people bring pets. The more animals who are chipped, the more we can easily reunite with owners.

Lastly, technology exists to help owners find lost pets. The fact that animals end up in animal shelters is not an animal sheltering problem. It's generally a pet owner problem. Of course there are accidental situations in which a responsible pet owner's pets are lost, but that is not the case for most. Let's encourage our stray holding facilities to use technology to provide up-to-date information about stray pets. Let's have municipalities provide more messaging to people in our communities about what to do when their pet is lost. Your average person doesn't know what to do.

I'd like to show you an online tool that is available for organizations right now. It's called an Iframe. Below you'll see the website for HSHV in Ann Arbor, MI. There are links for lost, found and stray animals. The lost and found animals are being populated to the website from lost and found reports that are submitted online by the public, populated in the organization's data management system, and pulled into this Iframe on the website. The stray animals are being populated onto the website directly from real-time operations at the shelter.

Owners have to be advocates for themselves and their pets. Animal shelters can use tools such as this, but you have to realize they have very limited resources to spend time and energy trying to make matches. I might call my dog a lab mix and someone else might call it a pit bull mix. Comparing some animal's physical characteristics is not comparing apples to apples, so the endeavor can become very complicated. Again, data management systems for animal sheltering operations can do the work to help catch these lost/found matches, but we really need the owners to take the lead in the search. But again, this is not a humane society problem.

You're going to hear a lot of information about lost and found pets today. It can feel like overwhelming situation, but this bill is focused clearly one thing – the possibility to adapt and improve the status-quo for animals in our state. Thank you.



[How to take a screenshot](#)

Stray Cats

Lost and Found Resources

- [Lost and Found Report](#)
- [Tips for Finding a Lost Animal](#)

Lost and Found Animals

Lost

- [Lost Cats](#)
- [Lost Dogs](#)
- [Lost Others](#)

Found

- [Found Cats](#)
- [Found Dogs](#)
- [Found Others](#)

Stray

- [Stray Cats](#)
- [Stray Dogs](#)
- [Stray Others](#)

Below are cats that are currently at HSHV as strays. If you see a cat below that you believe may be yours, please contact us at 734-661-3528 or come to our Intake Department between 9am-11am and noon-5pm.

IMPORTANT: It is our policy to put any adoptable strays up for adoption after 4-7 days of their arrival (animals with ID are held longer). If your contact information is imperative that you contact us right away.

To claim your pet, please bring:

- A picture of you and your pet, veterinary records, or other proof that the animal we are adopting is yours.
- Proof of a rabies vaccination. We can vaccinate your pet for an additional charge, if necessary.
- Be prepared to pay a **\$35 intake fee plus a board fee of \$25 per day** for each additional day the animal is held here. You will also need to pay medical fees, if necessary.

If you believe your pet is listed here, please call 734-661-3528 as soon as possible.



30588537

30588537

Cat

Female
Domestic
Shorthair/Mix
10 years

Animal in Custody



30590065

30590065

Cat

Male
Domestic
Shorthair/Mix
5 years

Animal in Custody

Good afternoon, my name is Susan Taney. I have been in the animal welfare sector for over 25 years from managing /working in shelters to running individual rescues. However, today I bring a rather unique perspective, as I have been helping coordinate the reunions of lost and found dogs for the last 6 years. I am the co-founder of Lost Dogs of Wisconsin and Lost Dogs of America and the founder of Lost Dogs Illinois.

Through this experience, I have found out what works and what doesn't. Based on that experience I have come to the overwhelming conclusion that the general public does not know what to do when they lose their loved family member or when the public finds a lost pet.

This SHOULD be a major concern for municipal shelters as these families with lost pets are not only to be considered clients of the facility, but they are also the taxpayers who are paying for the shelter's services. If finding their lost family member takes time and the shelter is not allowing that time, the shelter is doing a great injustice to both the client and the taxpayer.

I would like to bring to your attention to a recent set of guidelines put forth by the ASPCA regarding what they consider to be the minimum standards that shelters and stray holding facilities should be doing to help reunite lost pets in shelters. Many states have adopted these practices by law. At this point Wisconsin has not yet adopted any of these practices.

Examples are:

1. Shelters must check for ID, including microchips, tattoos, etc., at the time of intake.
2. Shelters must serve notice to identified owners of stray animals, and the hold times for stray animals must account for mail delivery.

3. Shelters must provide public notice, appropriate to the community, of stray animals entering the shelter.
4. Shelters should be authorized and encouraged to reduce or waive redemption fees.

Attached are the standards for review.

Most Wisconsin shelters and stray holding facilities do not meet these minimum standards recommended by the ASPCA. We lack the basic framework for a good Return to Owner system for lost pets. AND now Wisconsin wants to lessen the time owners have to find their pets.

Proponents for the bill have suggested that other national cities that are achieving a 90% or better live release rate are doing so because they have a shortened stray hold. In fact, there is no correlation between short stray holds and save rates. You can find plenty of shelters with short stray holds and horrific kill rates. And again, without any standardized reporting in Wisconsin by animal shelters to our Department of Agriculture, it is very difficult to do any analysis of the data.

In the last 20-30 years, the status of animals has been elevated from the barnyard to the bedroom. They are now loved family members. It is time to change our mindsets and fix the system. Please amend AB487 to remove the portion that reduces the stray hold from 7 days to 4 days in order for every loved family member to go home. Lessening the stray hold period only manages to get the pets out of the shelter sooner; it does NOT effectively promote getting the pets back to their families. We believe implementing new processes while retaining the 7 day stray hold will be far more effective.

Thank you for time and consideration.



The power of compassion.

**Nancy Weiss, DVM and Senior Veterinary Director, Wisconsin Humane Society
Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 487
Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, January 13, 2016**

Honorable Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Assembly Bill 487. My name is Dr. Nancy Weiss, and I am the Senior Veterinary Director at the Wisconsin Humane Society and have worked in animal shelters since 1998. The Wisconsin Humane Society (WHS) intakes approximately 13,000 domestic animals every year, and my team of six shelter veterinarians oversees the medical care of each animal in our facilities in Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Racine Counties. Of the thousands of stray and surrender animals we medically care for each year, one of our biggest challenges is the prevention of communicable illness in the shelter. From a medical perspective, I can verify that shorter stays in a shelter keep animals healthier and save lives.

One of the most common and challenging health issues facing animals in shelters is upper respiratory disease. Although generally treatable, upper respiratory disease, especially chronic infection, is challenging to treat in a shelter environment. Because it is so common, we measure upper respiratory disease transmission as a proxy for disease transmission in general. There are many other diseases that may be transmitted - some of which are very serious. When the length of stay, which is the total time that an animal spends in our care, decreased at WHS by 30% due to a different approach to population management, we found that the number of cats and dogs who picked up an upper respiratory infection at the shelter decreased by about 40%. In addition, for animals who did contract an upper respiratory infection in the shelter, the average treatment times decreased by 40% because shortened stays at the shelter mean fewer animals on a daily basis and better conditions for those animals.

The bill reduces Wisconsin's stray hold, which is effectively the longest in the nation. Most states have a stray hold of 3-5 days; Wisconsin's is written as seven days, however it is effectively eight days since the initial day of impoundment isn't counted. Every day that an animal spends in a shelter exposes him or her to stress and potential disease; the longer the stay, the more risks to the animal. It's important to note that just 1% of the dogs and cats who enter animal control in Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Racine Counties were reclaimed on days five through seven of the stray hold. Shelters across the state find similar trends. When we consider the stress and potential disease exposure that animals face at even the nicest shelters, it seems cruel to keep animals in shelter longer when they have such a small chance of being reclaimed between days five to seven. Disease and overcrowding are leading causes of preventable euthanasia in impoundment facilities. Reducing the length of seized and stray holds will save animals' lives.

We supported the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission in caring for some of the dogs seized from a dog fighting ring. Under current law, victims of dog fighting like those my team cared for must be euthanized after the case is resolved. Wisconsin is one of just 12 states left in the nation that support this practice. AB 487 will remove this practice, allowing experts to exercise judgment about whether or not an animal is safe for placement. In addition, the bill creates a process for seized animals to move through the system more quickly, which is critical for the health of these animals and others in shelter.

Thank you for your time. I ask you to pass AB 487 out of committee with both the stray and seizure components intact. From my perspective as a shelter veterinarian, it is one of the most important things we can do to save the lives of Wisconsin's animals.

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milwaukee, wi 53208

ozaukee campus
630 west dekora street
saukville, wi 53080

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2706 chicory road
racine, wi 53403

spay neuter clinic
9400 west lincoln avenue
west allis, wi 53227



The power of compassion.

**Anne Reed, Wisconsin Humane Society
Testimony in Support of 2015 Assembly Bill 487
Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
January 13, 2016**

Honorable Chairman and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Assembly Bill 487. It's my privilege to lead the Wisconsin Humane Society, Wisconsin's largest and oldest animal welfare organization. We have shelters in Milwaukee, Racine, and Ozaukee Counties, and we are the primary organization housing stray and seized animals in Racine and Ozaukee Counties.

We strongly support the entire bill, including its provisions for seized animals, but I'm going to talk here about the stray hold provision of the bill, because it affects more animals and is not understood by many in the public. Contrary to what some people will tell you today, the stray and seizure provisions of this bill are both based on the same critical principle: short stays save lives.

Long forced stays crowd shelters and endanger animals.

Imagine you're driving on the highway. You're cruising along, and you come to an accident in the opposite lanes. The traffic on your side slows down. The cars around you were many car lengths apart a minute ago, but now they're bumper to bumper, lane to lane. If cars could catch disease from each other, they would. Once you're past the accident, the cars speed up, and they're far apart again. Are there fewer cars on the road? No, it's the same number of cars. Because they're going faster, the highway isn't crowded. When they were going slowly, it was very crowded indeed.

Next imagine you're on the highway and a couple of cars are going slowly in the right lane. Is the highway crowded? No, not if those are the only slow cars. The quicker cars just go past them in the left lanes, with plenty of room.

Now imagine the speed limit on the highway is 10 miles per hour. Nobody is allowed go faster than that. Now we're bumper to bumper, lane to lane, all the way to Oconomowoc, or Milwaukee, or Marshfield, or Kewaskum, every hour of every day.

Our current stray holding period is like a ten-mile-per-hour speed limit for every one of the thousands of animals who become stray every year in Wisconsin. It makes every shelter more crowded than it needs to be. And because animals can and do catch diseases from each other, it puts every stray animal at real risk of illness and death.

A four-day stray hold will keep animals healthy without hurting owners' ability to find them.

Currently the law says we have to hold stray animals for seven days. We can't count the first day, and we have to wait all the way to the end of the last day. That means we can't start helping animals –

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finding homes for them, giving them most needed medical care, and so on – until their ninth day in our shelters.

The owners of stray animals all over the state have told us, by their behavior, that those last few days are wasted. If a dog is going to be claimed by its owner, we know the odds are overwhelming that it's going to happen by day four. Sadly, cats are almost never claimed by owners at all – but when they are, it's by day four. Fewer than 1% of animals are reclaimed between days 5 and 7, in every city or town where we have data. But in hopes of the vanishing possibility that somehow an animal might be in that tiny group, we're making thousands of animals sick, by forcing them all to stay until the ninth day. We're making the speed limit 10 miles per hour for everybody.

Let me explain how this affects animals in a very real way. Here's a scenario that happens very often. A cat comes into MADACC, Milwaukee Animal Control, as a stray. At the Wisconsin Humane Society, we "pull" more animals than any other organization from MADACC after their stray holds are up, and we find homes for them. On her fifth day at MADACC, this cat is still healthy. If it were legal, we could bring her over to our shelter and find her a home. But we can't take her until the ninth day. And by that time, because MADACC is crowded with every animal having to wait until its ninth day before we can help, she has gotten sick. We have many, many homeless cats back at our own shelter, and we have a responsibility to protect them from contagious disease. So we don't bring that cat to our shelter – and often, she doesn't get better. She was once somebody's pet, and she could have been in a happy new home. But she's dead, because Wisconsin law forced her to stay at a shelter longer than she needed to.

It's the same dynamic in small communities as well as large ones, large shelters as well as small ones. No matter how big or small your shelter and how many stray animals your community has, the shelter will always be more crowded, and less safe for animals, the longer each animal stays.

So why are people testifying today in favor of a long stray hold?

You may well wonder: if it's so clear that short stays save lives, why are there animal advocates here to oppose a shorter stray hold? With respect, they don't run animal shelters. One of the most common logical errors we all make is to take an idea that seems logical on a small scale, and assume it would also be logical on a large scale. If you are thinking about one individual stray dog, and you want to have the maximum possible chance that an owner will reclaim it, how long do you hold the dog? The longer the better. There's only a tiny chance, a Powerball chance, that someone could claim the dog after a long time in the shelter. But it's theoretically possible, and we think we heard a story, or maybe imagined a story, where it happened somewhere. It seems to make sense. But when you try to turn that into a rule for thousands of stray animals, it doesn't work. When you do that, you've made the speed limit 10 miles per hour for everyone, and animals get sick and die in overcrowded shelters.



The power of compassion.

You'll hear people say that a shorter stray hold would allow shelters to euthanize animals sooner. I want to be sure you clearly understand how mistaken this is. There are few if any shelters in our state who euthanize healthy animals just because their "time has run out." That practice went out with the rotary dial phone. Nowadays it's illness, not time limits, that kills animals in shelters. But let's say there's a shelter out there euthanizing healthy animals based on time limits alone. If that's true, why are they doing that? Because they think it's the only way to manage their space. And why are they out of space? Because their shelter is crowded – *required* to be crowded by our long stray holds. Just like the slow car in the left lane, we can give animals who need more time all the time they need – but only if we can get other animals through fast enough to leave space for them. If euthanasia for time limits alone is still going on anywhere in Wisconsin, it's *because* of our long forced hold for every stray animal.

You will hear that shelters can do more to help owners find their animals. Every field can improve; let's keep doing better by all means. But there is no reason to keep crowding shelters with long holds until we do better. To the contrary, when struggling organizations are overwhelmed with crowding and disease, it's all the more difficult for them to launch new approaches.

This bill will save lives.

Long holds cause crowding. Crowding causes illness. Illness causes death. This bill is the most important thing our state can do right now to save more shelter animals.

We urge you to pass the bill out of committee with both the seizure and stray provisions fully intact, and we thank you for your work.

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Hello.

My name is Carlene Hoehn. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today.

I am a volunteer with Lost Dogs of Wisconsin. I have been with the group for almost 5 years and serve on their Board of Directors. I am asking you to amend ~~AB487~~ (SB450) to remove the portion of the bill that reduces the stray hold time for lost pets.

In my years with volunteering with LDOW I have learned a lot about lost dog behavior, and subsequently behavior of the owners of lost pets.

Most owners do not know where to begin. They may spend a day or two waiting for the dog to come home, often on the advice of family or friends. They spend the first few days driving around the neighborhood looking for their lost companion before they call the local shelter.

Prior to working with owners I thought everyone knew to call your local police and the shelter in your area right away. I learned this is not true.

Many dogs travel long distances quickly and cross "borders" of shelter jurisdiction. Most owners may initially check with only the shelter for their city or county. Shelters and police departments are busy and do not usually offer owners advice on where else to check for their missing pet.

Owners may have physical or mental disabilities that prevent them from getting to the shelter. Lack of transportation, lack of internet service, lack of funds, English as a second language, elderly, - all of these things can limit an owner in how quickly they reclaim their lost pet.

The stray hold in Wisconsin currently is longer than most. But just joining the trend should not be a goal entered in to without thought. Before we change let's make sure we make a change that will give Wisconsinites a fair chance to reclaim their pet and not unduly tax shelter resources. Other states examined their policies and procedures and enacted rules regarding mandatory microchip scans and on line photos of impounded pets, and defining details of what "a reasonable effort to contact owners" means.

I am asking that ~~AB487~~ (SB450) be amended to remove the portion of the bill that reduces the stray hold for lost pets. Let's examine the law for household pets in its own light and be sure any change is for the better.

Thank you

Annie, Lost While Owners Were Away, Illustrates Why a Four Day Stray Hold is Insufficient

Posted on January 7, 2016 by [lostdogsofwisconsin](#)



The following testimony has been prepared by Annie's owner for the Public Hearing on AB487 on Wednesday, January 13 at 1:30 p.m. This bill has been introduced into the Wisconsin State Legislature and seeks to reduce the required stray hold for found animals from the current seven days to only four days. The main intent of this bill (Assembly Bill 487 and the Senate companion bill SB450) is to improve the outcome for seized dogs (often called Court Case dogs) in Wisconsin, which of course is a very good thing! Unfortunately, Wisconsin Humane Society and the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC) who helped draft the bill have also included a paragraph that reduces the stray hold for all lost pets(dogs AND cats).

I could not disagree more with the "logic" put forth by Spiros and Petrowski. Nor, as I have learned, do the many fine small rescue groups in the state.

As someone who lost a pet, I can attest to needing the longer time period. First, we were on vacation when our dog disappeared (not uncommon as I have learned), so it was three days before I could begin looking for my girl. Next, she disappeared from East Troy farm area, so I had a minimum of three shelters to check. The Racine County shelter is located at the east end of the county, adding to my distress. One major issue, of which I was unaware so you may be also, is that giving shelters a verbal description of your pet gives you a false sense of security. I received calls, only to find that the animal was nowhere close to matching a description of my Annie. This meant that I had to visit these sites and make a visual check of animals that had been brought in.

I'm really distressed that the authors would once again pull that "taxpayer money" language since owners are charged a hefty amount when, and if, they retrieve their beloved pet, as is an adoptive family. So that's just political jargon meant to perk the ears of the uninformed!

If they, or you, truly wish to reduce the amount of time a lost animal is in shelter, you will require all rescue facilities to post a digital image of pets after a 48 hour period. This is of no cost to them and would be of huge

benefit to both lost animals and their families. You would also require all pet owners to have microchips implanted. These are measures that would actually help return an animal to its family.

Lastly, to say that a reduced hold is of benefit to the animal is, frankly, absurd. Yes, being in the rescue facility would be traumatizing. But to think that being taken from there by anyone other than their family members would not just be another trauma, shows a lack of caring and understanding. As a person who has done rescue work, I have seen these poor animals go through these times of being passed off to a loving home. To them, all they understand is that it is not family.

Respectfully
Kay Frederick

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Attachment # 1 "Rootbeer" Date Found 10/7/15 Date Stray Hold Up: 10/15
Date of XRays: Wk of 10/19 Date Neutered: Wk 10/26, then available to go to adoptive home

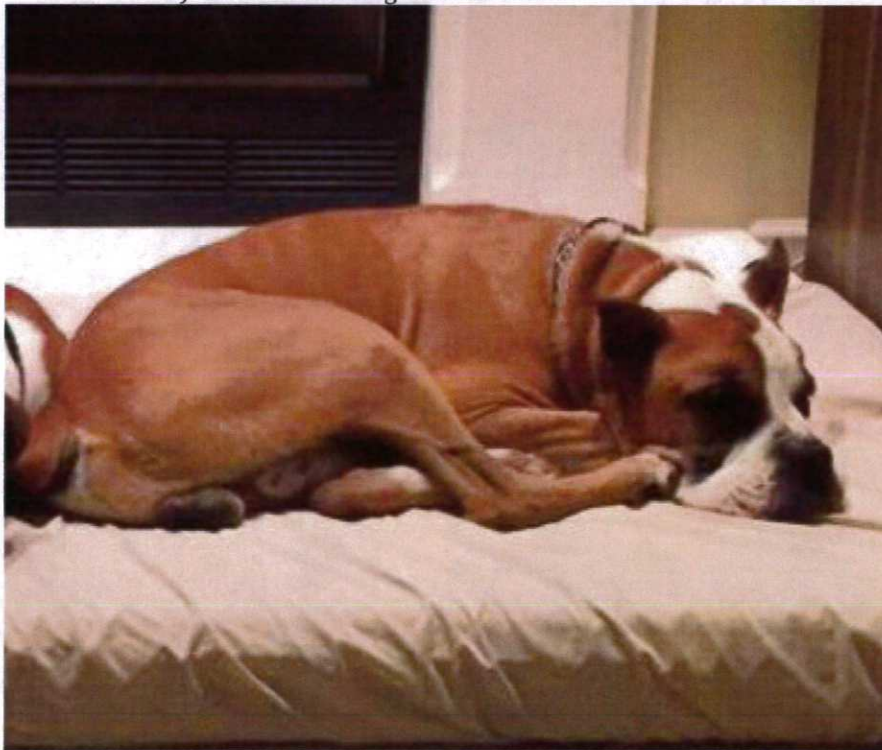


Attachment # 2

a) "Titan" pulled by rescue on 4th day of stray hold, on arrival at foster home



b) 4 wks after being in foster home



INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION COUNCIL OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY

c/o Mayor Stephen Scaffidi, City of Oak Creek, 8040 South 6 Street, Oak Creek, WI 53154

January 12, 2016

Representative Joel Kleefisch, Chair
Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee
Wisconsin State Capitol
2 East Main Street
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Representative Kleefisch:

The Intergovernmental Cooperation Council of Milwaukee County (ICC) has been made aware of Assembly Bill 487/Senate Bill 450, which makes positive changes to Wisconsin Statute Chapter 173, "Animals; humane officers".

Specifically, SB 450/AB 487 addresses the trajectory for animals that have been seized by law enforcement or brought in as strays. Positive changes resulting from the passage of this bill are as follows:

- **Save taxpayer dollars.** Taxpayers fund holds for seized and stray animals, and holding animals longer than is necessary isn't a wise use of taxpayer dollars. This bill allows for shortened holds when appropriate. For example, current law does not allow animal control facilities the legal standing to commence court action to sever ownership of animals. This bill would allow an organization the ability to seek court action where appropriate.
- **Animals aren't unnecessarily treated as evidence.** An animal's condition even a few days after seizure is irrelevant in court. But in the past, shelters have been required to hold animals for as long as years while cases move through the court system. For example, the City of Milwaukee held 15 dogs seized for dogfighting for three years and another 26 for over a year, which cost taxpayers over half a million dollars. The bill provides a process to allow animals to leave the shelter much sooner.
- **Brings Wisconsin in line with other states.** This bill reduces Wisconsin's stray hold from 8 days (7 days plus the day of seizure) to 5 days (4 days plus the date of seizure). This would bring Wisconsin in line with other states, most of which have a stray hold

Bayside-Brown Deer-County of Milwaukee-Cudahy-Fox Point-Franklin-Glendale-Greendale
Greenfield-Hales Corners-Milwaukee-Oak Creek-River Hills-St. Francis-Shorewood
South Milwaukee-Wauwatosa-West Allis-West Milwaukee-Whitefish Bay

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION COUNCIL OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY

c/o Mayor Stephen Scaffidi, City of Oak Creek, 8040 South 6 Street, Oak Creek, WI 53154

between 3 and 5 days. The majority of stray animals are reclaimed on hold days 1 through 4. As a result, taxpayers are paying for longer holds and getting very little value in return. Longer holds also cause shelter over-crowding and lead to animals falling ill and not becoming candidates for adoption, increasing shelter euthanasia for illness. This bill would save animals' lives while simultaneously reducing taxpayer burdens.

The ICC supports this life-saving piece of legislation, which would help shelters save more animals' lives and taxpayer costs associated unnecessarily long hold times. We give our full support to the passage of this bill and urge you to do the same by passing out of committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Stephen Scaffidi, Chair
Intergovernmental Cooperation Council of Milwaukee County

cc: K. Sparapani, Executive Director, Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission

Bayside-Brown Deer-County of Milwaukee-Cudahy-Fox Point-Franklin-Glendale-Greendale
Greenfield-Hales Corners-Milwaukee-Oak Creek-River Hills-St. Francis-Shorewood
South Milwaukee-Wauwatosa-West Allis-West Milwaukee-Whitefish Bay



Marlene Walsh, Bay Area Humane Society
Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 487
Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, January 13, 2016

Honorable Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for your time this afternoon. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in strong support of Assembly Bill 487. I have worked in animal welfare for more than 30 years. As the Executive Director of the Bay Area Humane Society in Green Bay, Wisconsin, I see every day the impact that AB 487 will have for the animals entrusted in my care. Bay Area Humane has an annual intake of just under 4,000 animals each year, but with lost and found, public spay/neuter programs and vaccination clinics, more than 6,000 animals come through our shelter doors each year. AB 487 will make a difference for the animals we serve, as well as for animals across the state. I ask you to pass AB 487 with both the seized and stray hold provisions intact. Passing AB 487 will save animals' lives, save taxpayer dollars, and bring Wisconsin law that regulates processes for both seized and stray animals in line with other states' best practices.

Current Wisconsin law treats animals seized from abusive situations the same as any other piece of evidence, despite the fact that animals' evidentiary value diminishes very quickly. Animals are held until a case is fully adjudicated, which sometimes means that animals are sitting in shelters for years, with taxpayers footing the bill. In addition, Wisconsin is just one of 12 states that still has the practice of requiring euthanasia for dogs involved in dog fighting, regardless of the dog's behavior. This bill will allow experts to determine whether an animal can be placed based on behavior rather than history.

In addition, the bill addresses another type of hold that affects Wisconsin's animals: the stray hold. Wisconsin's stray hold is effectively eight days – seven days plus the in initial day of impoundment – making it the longest in the nation. It's always the priority of Bay Area Humane – and every shelter – to get animals back to their homes, and we go to great lengths to reunite animals with their families including immediately posting a lost animal on our lost and found website pages, as well as on our Facebook pages and those of our volunteers and fosters.

It's important to remember that the bill lowers the minimum stray hold. Bay Area Humane and other shelters can, and always will, hold animals longer when families need additional time to reunite with their pets – perhaps they're on vacation or experiencing an illness that makes it difficult for them to reclaim within the stray hold.

The majority of stray animals, however, go home in the first four days of the stray hold, and just 3% of stray animals in our care are reclaimed between days 5 and 7, but all stray animals are held for the full eight days. Shelters are like hospitals: the longer a patient, an animal, is in our care, the more likely he or she is to get sick, no matter how great our cleaning practices. This is because animals are stressed in a new environment and their immunity decreases. It is not fair for our entire population of animals to be exposed to increased stress and disease to give a very small minority of animals the opportunity to go home, especially when nearly every other state in the country is successful in getting animals home with just a three to five day stray hold. It's time for Wisconsin to join the rank of states who have made the common-sense shift to a shorter hold, saving both animals' lives and taxpayer dollars.

This lifesaving bill is supported by progressive humane societies across the state, including The Bay Area Humane Society, Elmbrook Humane Society, the Humane Society of Southern Wisconsin, Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC), Oshkosh Area Humane Society, Sheboygan County Humane Society, and the Wisconsin Humane Society. Please vote to pass AB 487 out of committee. This bill will save animals' lives, save taxpayer dollars, and bring Wisconsin law in line with other states.



Dueterbeck, Melodie

From: Moore, Ashlee
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2016 11:16 AM
To: Dueterbeck, Melodie
Subject: Fwd: Support For AB 487/SB 450

Ashlee Moore
Representative Joel Kleefisch
Office: (608) 266-8552

Begin forwarded message:

From: G <guinnessmom@hotmail.com>
Date: January 12, 2016 at 4:57:05 PM CST
To: "Ashlee.Moore@legis.wisconsin.gov" <Ashlee.Moore@legis.wisconsin.gov>
Subject: Support For AB 487/SB 450

Dear Committee Members:

As a Wisconsin resident,, animal lover, and shelter volunteer, I want to urge you to support AB 487/SB 450. This vitally important bill will help save the lives of countless animals in our state's shelter systems, while also giving innocent victims of dog fighting a second chance at life. That's a win-win for Wisconsin.

There are two primary components to the bill. First, the state's mandatory stray-hold period will be reduced from seven to four days. Wisconsin has the longest such period in the country, and we know that a reduction in the stray holding period translates to a tremendous increase in the animals' chances of leaving the shelter alive. The data is clear on this issue: lower stray-holds will save lives.

A reduced stray-hold period will also save tax dollars because the municipal shelters can move animals more quickly and efficiently into forever homes (saving the costs associated with longer holding periods). But most importantly, a shorter stay in the shelter means less time for animals to become stressed, contract an illness or expose others to illness.

The second part of the bill will give dog fighting survivors a second chance at life. We're one of only 12 states that still automatically stigmatize fight bust survivors. Not only that, but our current law mandates that these innocent victims be automatically killed. That's not fair and it needs to change.

We know from previous fighting stories, like the Michael Vick saga, that these dogs can and do go on to wonderful lives as therapy and service dogs, breed ambassadors and fantastic family couch potatoes. In fact, of the 49 dogs rescued from Vick's property, nearly all of them went on to live great lives. All they needed was a second chance, which is exactly what AB 487/SB 450 will provide.

This bill is hugely important to me and the countless other Wisconsin voters who want to make our state as safe and humane as possible. Please support AB 487/SB 450.

Thank you.

Linda Gatton

Dueterbeck, Melodie

From: Moore, Ashlee
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2016 11:15 AM
To: Dueterbeck, Melodie
Subject: Fwd: Assembly Bill 487 and Senate Bill 450

Ashlee Moore
Representative Joel Kleefisch
Office: (608) 266-8552

Begin forwarded message:

From: GLAAS staff <adopt@glaas.org>
Date: January 13, 2016 at 8:29:02 AM CST
To: <Ashlee.Moore@legis.wisconsin.gov>
Subject: Assembly Bill 487 and Senate Bill 450
Reply-To: GLAAS staff <adopt@glaas.org>

Greetings:

My name is Janine Rubeck and I am the Shelter Manager for the Green Lake Area Animal Shelter in Green Lake, Wisconsin. I am writing to voice our support of Assembly Bill 487 and Senate Bill 450.

Wisconsin Humane Society and Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission have produced a flyer encouraging support for this bill, and we agree with this position statement in its entirety.

I would be happy to offer further input on request.

Janine Rubeck
GLAAS
920-294-3042

Linda Schultz

**Testimony in Support of 2015/16 Assembly Bill 487
Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, January 13, 2016**

Honorable Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Assembly Bill 487.

As a resident of Wisconsin and someone who cares about animals, I'm in favor of AB487, in its entirety. I love that, under this bill an animal seized from abusive conditions, will have the ability to quickly be treated for its conditions and released to humane societies or rescues that can get them in foster homes and adoptive homes. Cost savings to taxpayers are realized with shorter stays in government run animal control facilities, while life savings are realized by the animals.

I also love the part of this bill that reduces length of stray hold. It is already of record that 99% of reclaimed animals go home between the first and fourth day of their stay. Currently, much less fortunate are the unclaimed animals, paying the price of their long stay in stress and sickness, deteriorating both mentally and physically. I know there will be testimony that the stray hold should not be reduced from 7 to 4 days, but, contrariwise, statistics have already proven that a longer stay does not mean more reclaiming from owners. The irony is that the very proponents of the 7 day stray hold quote statistics of no kill (90% live release) from the very shelters that have 3-5 day stray holds such as Austin TX, Portland OR, Hamilton Co IN, Kansas City MO. I have found out that Wisconsin is only of seven states that have the extended seven day stray hold. Add to that the day of confiscation and we find Wisconsin is trailing everyone. That is not the kind of legislation that is good for Wisconsin and its animals. A longer stay means sicker animals and fewer adoptable animals due to sickness or behavior issues, as well as increased cost to taxpayers. A loss to all. Further confirmation that AB487 is good bill comes from The Best Friends Society support of this legislation, *"the state's mandatory stray-hold period will be reduced from seven to four days. Wisconsin has the longest such period in the country, and we know that a reduction in the stray holding period translates to a tremendous increase in the animals' chances of leaving the shelter alive. The data is clear on this issue: lower stray-holds will save lives."*

With regards to an animal's stray hold period, I have two personal experiences I would like to share:

The first experience I'm sharing is about a stray dog I found at my workplace, in Plymouth, this last October. He was a friendly, beautiful dog. (There is picture in attachment- #1) The only thing about him of worry was that he had quite a perceptible knot on his leg. I brought him to a local shelter on October Seventh. The staff didn't think the leg caused him pain, so it didn't qualify for urgent triage. He wasn't reclaimed. His stray hold was up on fifteenth. It was only then that the small shelter could schedule x-rays, and following the x-ray reading; were able to schedule his neuter. His shelter stay ended up being a total of three weeks after his admission. Since outside appointment scheduling is needed for all vetting, this example shows that a small Wisconsin shelter also struggles with the eight day stray hold as do the larger ones. Meanwhile, the pet remains in a shelter environment an excessive amount of time, instead of in a home.

The second experience I'd like to share is the adoption, that I currently have pending on a dog from a Boxer Rescue. (There is a picture in attachment #2) In September, my husband I saw his shelter intake picture posted by the Rescue, and immediately applied for adoption. We were so relieved that the rescue was able to pull Titan on his 4th day from the North Carolina shelter! He was emaciated and heartworm positive, his lungs were compromised. With lower immunity, he was too likely a candidate for life threatening complications if he had endured a long shelter stay. Strays arriving at our Wisconsin shelters are no different. They have been wandering outside, already exposed to parasites in scavenged food. They are domestic animals, whose bodies have been challenged by survival in the elements. It doesn't take much for them to succumb to sickness in our shelters.

AB487 has been written with both the animal and taxpayer in mind. I fully support the bill and thank all its co-sponsors for drafting the bill that Wisconsin residents, shelters and animals have waiting for.

Linda Schultz

West Bend, WI

Dueterbeck, Melodie

From: Moore, Ashlee
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2016 11:16 AM
To: Dueterbeck, Melodie
Subject: Fwd: [Possible SPAM] OPPOSED TO AB487

Ashlee Moore
Representative Joel Kleefisch
Office: (608) 266-8552

Begin forwarded message:

From: <vicki@thunderhillchows.com>
Date: January 12, 2016 at 4:52:37 PM CST
To: <Rep.Kleefisch@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Rep.Kremer@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Rep.Spiros@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Rep.OttJ@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Rep.Rodriguez@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Rep.Horlacher@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Rep.Novak@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Rep.Born@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Rep.Duchow@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Rep.Goyke@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Rep.Kessler@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Rep.Zamarripa@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Rep.Johnson@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Melodie.Dueterbeck@legis.wisconsin.gov>, <Ashlee.Moore@legis.wisconsin.gov>
Subject: [Possible SPAM] OPPOSED TO AB487

Dear Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety,

re: AB487

It's our understanding that you've been inundated with form letters from animal rights activists in support of the AB487. Please take time to consider our thoughts as well.

We strongly oppose reducing the hold time for strays from 7 days to 4. I spent 25 years as chairman of a Chow Chow welfare organization that was national in scope. I spent much time helping people who had lost their dogs. It was my experience that many people do not know how to look for a lost pet and often waste several days waiting for the dog to come home on its own before contacting animal shelters. AB487 would make it impossible for such people to locate their pets before they are destroyed, sent out of the area, or sold to someone else. These owners would have no recourse nor any ability to retrieve their rightful property.

AB487 is especially disturbing in that it does not require the animal to be checked for an ID, such as a microchip or tattoo, nor are there any requirements to publicize the animals to facilitate the search for the rightful owners.

Imagine that you went on vacation, left your pet with a good friend to care for, and it got loose accidentally. Will you be able to reclaim your pet in time? How would you feel if it was killed

because you could get there? Four days is far too short a time. They need 7 days.

The second part of AB487 is as much or more disturbing. It is our understanding that someone accused of a "crime against animals" whose animals are seized could permanently lose their animals if they cannot pay for their care during court proceedings EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT FOUND NOT GUILTY OR IF CHARGES ARE DROPPED. This is completely unacceptable. How can you justify penalizing the innocent in this manner? It's like being tried, found innocent, but being sent to prison anyway. This section needs to be completely scrapped or rethought.

We would like to recommend that you take a serious look at the Illinois animal Control Act for guidance: <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=1704&ChapterID=41>

as well as the Illinois Animal Welfare

Act: <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=1375>

PLEASE do not pass AB487 out of your committee.

Thank you,

Vicki DeGruy, secretary
Wisconsin Chow Chow Club, Inc. (est. 1936)
<http://www.chowwelfare.com/wcci/>

Janesville WI

on behalf of our membership:

Dennis Balczewski
Mike Bledsoe
Joe Castellucci
Avis Christopherson
Lisa Cone
Phil DeGruy
John & Raquel Hanebuth
Kim & Eric Johnsen
Shannon & Mike Koller
Kevin Meske
Pauline Michael
Mae Palm
Shirley Skelton
Harold Toudt

=====

Re: AB487 Stray Hold Time

I would like to see the stray hold remain at 7 days rather than being reduced to 4. An alternative might be to allow the 4 day hold in cities with a population greater than 100,000, or a shelter that exceeds intake of 10,000 animals per year. However, this would still create a situation in those large cities where "collateral damage" becomes acceptable due to the high volume of intake in large metro shelters.

An example given to me by the legislative attorney for a large out-of-state animal organization was a statistic from MADACC in Milwaukee - 114 of the 11,221 dogs and cats who entered MADACC in 2014 (1%) were reclaimed on days five through seven. Only 1% may seem insignificant to some, but if AB487 had already been in effect in 2014, that would have been 114 devastated families that may not have gotten their pet back, just because they weren't fast enough. Maybe they couldn't get around to all the shelters in time, maybe they decided to try posters and ads first, or just searching on their own. Huge metro shelters benefit financially because the 4 day hold cuts costs. In the rest of Wisconsin, especially in rural areas where I live, trying to reunite owners and pets can be more challenging and take longer.

Some proponents of the 4 day hold claim that the animals suffer undue stress for that extra 3 days currently required. Again, I think this is mainly an issue only at high volume facilities such as MADACC in Milwaukee. It doesn't have to be that way. A prime example would be Clark County Humane Society in Neillsville. They separate cats and dogs, and have a play room for cats filled with cat trees, comfy furniture, and toys (this is after a quarantine period of course). They have a new "Doggie Sleepover" program as well. CCHS proactively develops ways to reduce stress for animals that may be staying there longer to wait for their forever family to come adopt them.

Essentially, the 4-day versus 7-day hold boils down to whether collateral damage is acceptable for the greater financial good of certain large facilities or animal control officers and organizations. Financial good versus animal lives and emotional bonds with families. I don't find it acceptable, and believe that facilities with a problem need to start thinking outside the box and change their ways.

Thank you for your time,

Marsha Hague

Hammond, WI 54015

Duesterbeck, Melodie

From: Kay Frederick <kayfrederick@wi.rr.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 06, 2016 9:22 AM
To: Rep.Kleefisch
Subject: AB487

Representative Kleefisch,

I am unable to attend the public hearing on this bill. I would, therefore, ask that you read this into the public record. It was a response that I had written to my representative regarding this issue:

I could not disagree more with the "logic" put forth by Spiros and Petrowski. Nor, as I have learned, do the many fine small rescue groups in the state.

As someone who lost a pet, I can attest to needing the longer time period. First, we were on vacation when our dog disappeared (not uncommon as I have learned), so it was three days before I could begin looking for my girl. Next, she disappeared from East Troy farm area, so I had a minimum of three shelters to check. The Racine County shelter is located at the east end of the county, adding to my distress. One major issue, of which I was unaware so you may be also, is that giving shelters a verbal description of your pet gives you a false sense of security. I received calls, only to find that the animal was nowhere close to matching a description of my Annie. This meant that I had to visit these sites and make a visual check of animals that had been brought in.

I'm really distressed that the authors would once again pull that "taxpayer money" language since owners are charged a hefty amount when, and if, they retrieve their beloved pet, as is an adoptive family. So that's just political jargon meant to perk the ears of the uninformed!

If they, or you, truly wish to reduce the amount of time a lost animal is in shelter, you will require all rescue facilities to post a digital image of pets after a 48 hour period. This is of no cost to them and would be of huge benefit to both lost animals and their families. You would also require all pet owners to have microchips implanted. These are measures that would actually help return an animal to its family.

Lastly, to say that a reduced hold is of benefit to the animal is, frankly, absurd. Yes, being in the rescue facility would be traumatizing. But to think that being taken from there by anyone other than their family members would not just be another trauma, shows a lack of caring and understanding. As a person who has done rescue work, I have seen these poor animals go through these times of being passed off to a loving home. To them, all they understand is that it is not family.

Respectfully
Kay Frederick

Milwaukee

The ASPCA has recently released a Position Statement on Responsibilities of Animal Shelters. We are very pleased that they have put a high emphasis on shelter transparency and proactively reuniting lost pets with their families.

Below are some excerpts from this Position Statement. Does your local shelter or stray holding facility do these things? We would like to see American shelters and stray holding meet these standards and feel that there is a need for legislation to enforce them. Please discuss these items with your state legislators and ask that they be mandated for all American shelters and stray holding facilities.

Goal 3: Owned animals are quickly and reliably returned to their owners

A. Shelters must check for ID, including microchips, tattoos, etc., at the time of intake. Checking animals for identification at the time of intake should be required by law of all animal shelters, public and private. The administrative burden associated with this requirement is minimal compared to the benefits of quickly reuniting animals with their owners. This requirement should be extended to owner-surrendered animals, as the information concerning ownership of a micro-chipped animal can confirm current ownership, shed light on possibility that other owners may exist, and must be updated regardless in the event of a subsequent adoption.

B. Shelters must serve notice to identified owners of stray animals, and the hold times for stray animals must account for mail delivery. Even in 2015, the U.S. Mail continues to represent the method by which many, if not most, people receive communications from local government, utility companies, financial institutions, the courts, etc. Thus, the mail represents a relatively reliable means of communication, and while other means of contacting owners are encouraged, shelters should be required to serve notice to identified owners by mail, regardless of other methods of communication that might be attempted. In order to provide owners with a meaningful opportunity to reclaim their animals, stray animal hold times should be of sufficient length to account for the additional time that notice by mail requires.

C. Shelters must provide public notice, appropriate to the community, of stray animals entering the shelter. Shelters have an obligation to give notice to the community of stray pets that enter their facilities in order to assist and facilitate the return of those pets to their owners. While online postings, whether on a shelter's website or other web platforms, have become commonplace, this may still not be feasible for all shelters. Thus, the form this notice should take may vary by community. Nevertheless, notice that is reasonably calculated to reach community members should be required of all shelters accepting stray animals.

D. Shelters must provide clear notice to the public concerning shelter locations, hours, fees and the return-to-owner process. The ASPCA strongly supports requiring the provision of this information to the public. Where possible, it should be available on a shelter's website, but certainly, information regarding fees and the return-to-owner process should be available in written form at the shelter itself.

E. Shelters must establish a reasonable process for matching stray animals admitted to the shelter with reports of lost pets received by the shelter from owners. The ASPCA supports a requirement that shelters establish and publicize a reasonable process for helping stray pets return to owners in search of them. The most effective approaches will include a process for monitoring lost pet reports for possible matches with stray animals admitted to the shelter. However, because the appearance of an animal may change significantly while lost, or information provided in lost pet reports may be incomplete or inaccurate, the ASPCA believes that shelters should provide clear notice to owners searching for their lost pets that there is no substitute for visiting the shelter in person.

F. Shelters must be accessible to the public during reasonable hours for the return-to owner process. The ASPCA supports a requirement that shelters be accessible during reasonable hours to owners seeking to reclaim their pet. These hours should include some reasonable additional period of time beyond the typical workday (e.g. 9am to 5pm Monday through Friday) so that pet owners who may not have flexible work schedules have the best opportunity to reclaim their pets. What constitutes "reasonable" access depends on factors including the length of the hold period, the nature of the community, e.g., urban, suburban, rural, and the resources of the shelter.

G. Shelters should be authorized and encouraged to reduce or waive redemption fees. For the reasons discussed above in relation to adoption and placement, the ASPCA supports the granting of specific authorization for shelters to reduce or waive fees to owners seeking to reclaim their pets and encourages shelters to regularly and consistently use this tool to reunite more pets with their families.

H. Return-to-owner from the field should be expressly authorized. The ASPCA strongly supports legal authorization of return-to-owner from the field for animals with identification. This practice not only reduces burdens on shelters, but it straightforwardly accomplishes the goal of quick and reliable return.



5694 Hwy #7 East
Suite 165
Markham, ON
L3P 0E3

Jan. 11, 2016

I am writing to you about my concerns regarding bill AB487. I am the developer and operator of a National Database for Lost & Found Pets. My concern regarding the bill is the reduction in the stray hold time from 7 days to 4 days. The issue regarding court case dogs is entirely different and both issues should be addressed separately.

Through my experience in working with many groups and shelters regarding strays, there are three main issues that I want to raise that are affected by the reduction in hold time.

1. Currently, when a pet goes missing in a populated area, the animal could be taken in at many different shelters. When shelters do not provide photos and other information about their intakes online, it makes it extremely difficult for the owner to visit each shelter, every vet clinic, search websites, Facebook pages, newspaper ads and also physically search for their pet. Often times, their pet is found within just a few days, but other pets take longer to find.
2. Pet owners away on vacation that have left their pet with a pet sitter or a boarding facility, may not even be aware their pet has gotten out and is missing. The extra few days makes a big difference.
3. Often times people finding pets are not notifying shelters or surrendering the pet to the local shelter as they fear for the pet's safety. Reducing the stray hold time will not improve this situation.

Once a National Database is in place where every lost and found pet is listed and everyone knows where to look to see if their pet has been found and is at a shelter, then reducing the stray hold time then reducing the stray hold time then may make sense. But not at this time.

Please amend AB487 to remove the portion that reduces the stray hold from 7 days to 4 days. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rob Goddard
Helping Lost Pets
www.HelpingLostPets.com
647 955-8439

Representative Kleefisch,

I am unable to attend the public hearing on this bill. I would, therefore, ask that you read this into the public record. It was a response that I had written to my representative regarding this issue:

I could not disagree more with the "logic" put forth by Spiros and Petrowski. Nor, as I have learned, do the many fine small rescue groups in the state.

As someone who lost a pet, I can attest to needing the longer time period. First, we were on vacation when our dog disappeared (not uncommon as I have learned), so it was three days before I could begin looking for my girl. Next, she disappeared from East Troy farm area, so I had a minimum of three shelters to check. The Racine County shelter is located at the east end of the county, adding to my distress. One major issue, of which I was unaware so you may be also, is that giving shelters a verbal description of your pet gives you a false sense of security. I received calls, only to find that the animal was nowhere close to matching a description of my Annie. This meant that I had to visit these sites and make a visual check of animals that had been brought in.

I'm really distressed that the authors would once again pull that "taxpayer money" language since owners are charged a hefty amount when, and if, they retrieve their beloved pet, as is an adoptive family. So that's just political jargon meant to perk the ears of the uninformed!

If they, or you, truly wish to reduce the amount of time a lost animal is in shelter, you will require all rescue facilities to post a digital image of pets after a 48 hour period. This is of no cost to them and would be of huge benefit to both lost animals and their families. You would also require all pet owners to have microchips implanted. These are measures that would actually help return an animal to its family.

Lastly, to say that a reduced hold is of benefit to the animal is, frankly, absurd. Yes, being in the rescue facility would be traumatizing. But to think that being taken from there by anyone other than their family members would not just be another trauma, shows a lack of caring and understanding. As a person who has done rescue work, I have seen these poor animals go through these times of being passed off to a loving home. To them, all they understand is that it is not family.

Respectfully
Kay Frederick

I am writing to you about my concerns regarding bill AB487.

In October of 2013, one of my cats, Lily, became frightened by window repairmen and escaped through one of the windows. I left food and water out for her, but didn't see her. I decided to check the abandoned house where I had found her a couple of years before. She was there, but wouldn't come to me, so I left food and water for her. I repeated this process a couple of times. After not seeing her for a couple of days, I started checking the MADACC website for female cats. I did not see her. After about a week, I decided to look at all of the pictures of cats on the website. At that time, I thought that Lily had a microchip. (I later found that I had somehow missed getting her microchipped along with my other pets). I found her under the category of undetermined gender. Although it was a few minutes after the shelter closed, I called MADACC's number. Thankfully, someone answered and said I could see the cat in the morning. I also e-mailed a couple of friends who worked at MADACC to try to ensure that no mistakes were made and she was not going to be killed before I got there. (She was a "fraidy cat" and not too cooperative with the staff). I went to MADACC the following morning. Lily was very glad to see me. She cooperated with staff to get her immunizations updated and get a microchip.

Due to my job and other problems, I was perhaps not as aggressive in my hunt for Lily as I should have been. However, I think that work and other concerns might cause other pet owners to need more time than 3 or 4 days to locate a lost pet." I am very thankful that the shelter had to keep Lily for a week before she was scheduled to be killed. She is in the room with me now and is doing just fine.

Karen Smith Burns

On behalf of the members and supporters of Missing Pet Partnership, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to reuniting lost companion animals with their owner/guardians, I wanted to comment on the proposed legislation of Assembly Bill 487 and the Senate companion bill SB450.

It is my understanding that the State of Wisconsin is considering reducing the stray hold requirements on impounded dogs and cats in Wisconsin animal shelters from 7 days down to just a 4 day hold. Although I am sure this has been proposed for the purpose of lifting a "burden" from taxes by saving them money, I can assure you that a reduction in stray holding times as proposed will only create *more* burdens on your tax payers due to the permanent displacement of loved companion animals. It is difficult enough for tax payers to recover their missing pets as it is, and forcing them to know how and where to search for their missing pet in such a restricted time frame only reduces the chance that lost dogs and cats will be returned home.

Instead of decreasing the hold times, Wisconsin shelters should consider maintaining their 7 day hold time and adopting innovative lost and found programs which include making certain that they are following the position statements outlined by the ASPCA which include that "Shelters must establish a reasonable process for matching stray animals admitted to the shelter with reports of lost pets received by the shelter from owners." Sadly, most animal shelters are simply not taking the time to cross reference lost pet reports with the animals held in their cages. Instead, shelters are passively waiting for the owner of the stray animals to show up at their facility and when no one shows up, this is blamed on "uncaring" owners and the focus of the shelter is to rehome the animal. In reality, when dogs and cats escape from their families it causes conflict and chaos in the life of the pet owner. The majority of families return home from work only to discover their pet escaped from their home (Day 1 of holding period at the shelter). They may drive around their neighborhood, but they are not able to go to their local animal shelter since by the time they find out where it is, the shelter is closed. They do what they can that night (on line perhaps) but the next day, they must go to work (Day 2). Sometimes they are able to get permission to take the following day (Day 3) off of work, but more than likely they will have to wait until the weekend before they will have the time and ability to drive down to the local shelter. If your stray holding periods are reduced from 7 days down to 3 or even 4 days, people whose dogs and cats go missing on Monday will likely be adopted out to new families (or euthanized) by the time the pet owner can get there (Saturday).

Instead of reducing stray holding times, Missing Pet Partnership encourages animal shelters to instead adopt innovative lost pet recovery programs, to educate their staff and volunteers in how to counsel the public in lost pet recovery techniques, and to partner with on-line lost pet recovery sites like Lost Dogs of Wisconsin, Lost Dogs of America, and HelpingLostPets.com. Shelters that have taken these proactive, progressive steps to increasing lost pet reunifications have seen remarkable increases in their RTO (“return to owner”) rates and a decrease in the numbers of animals that they must take in. Through training provided by Missing Pet Partnership, one shelter in Lynwood, Washington increased their RTO to 27% (the national RTO rate on dogs is only 16%) while another shelter in Boston quadrupled their RTO on lost cats. Recently I co-presented a national webinar hosted by The Humane Society of the United States called, “Five Steps Shelters Can Take to Increase Cat Reclaims.” This webinar is available for free online for anyone, including Wisconsin animal shelter staff and volunteers to learn more about preventing lost cats from ending up in shelters in the first place. The webinar can be found here: <http://www.animalsheltering.org/trainings/keeping-cats-homes-5-steps-shelters-can-take-increase-cat-reclaims>

An increase in education and adopting cutting edge lost pet recovery programs, rather than reducing the stray hold times, is what is needed to help more animals. The proposed reduction from 7 days to 4 days will dramatically decrease the percentage of pet owners in the state of Wisconsin who are able to recover their lost pets.

Thank you for reading my statement.

Sincerely,

Kathy “Kat” Albrecht

Founder

Missing Pet Partnership

www.missingpetpartnership.org



We all support Assembly Bill 487 and Senate Bill 450 and urge you to, as well. Here's why:

- **The bill saves animals' lives.** Disease and overcrowding are the leading causes of preventable euthanasia in impoundment facilities. Reducing the length of seized and stray holds saves lives.
- **The bill saves tax dollars.** The longer the hold, the more taxpayers pay, and the fewer funds are available for other critical functions. In the extra days required by a long hold, taxpayers are paying a high price for a small number of animals.
- **The bill brings Wisconsin in line with other states.** Wisconsin has one of the longest stray holds in the nation. Most states' holds are 3-5 days; Wisconsin's is 7. In addition, Wisconsin is one of only twelve states that still requires the arcane practice euthanizing victims of dog fighting.

Say "YES" to AB487/SB450



How would things change for victims of animal cruelty?

Under current law, animals seized for cruelty are often held until a case is over, even though their evidentiary value declines within days. In the past, shelters have been required to hold animals for as long as years while cases proceed – and then have been required to euthanize dog fighting victims when the case is over. This bill provides ways to let animals leave the shelter much sooner, and allows common-sense judgment to govern whether an animal can be safely adopted.

How would things change for stray dogs?

Under current law, stray animals must be held for a minimum seven days – eight days in practice, because the law does not count the day of initial impoundment. This bill allows shelters to adopt out animals on the animal's sixth day in the shelter, after the animal is held for a minimum four-day stray hold, plus the first day of impoundment.

Most animals are reclaimed on days 1-4 of the stray hold.

In fact, just 1% of the dogs and cats who entered MADACC in 2014 were reclaimed on days five through seven of the stray hold. Shelters across the state find similar trends. Forcing animals to stay a full seven days increases stress, disease, and overcrowding.

Bay Area Humane Society, Elmbrook Humane Society, Green Lake Area Animal Shelter, Humane Society of Marathon County, Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC), Oshkosh Area Humane Society, Sheboygan County Humane Society and the Wisconsin Humane Society strongly support AB 487/SB 450. By allowing shelters to find homes for animals sooner, the bill would save animals' lives, save taxpayer dollars, and bring Wisconsin into line with other states.