

Testimony before the House Agriculture, Livestock, & Natural Resources Committee
In regard to HB 13-1125
February 18, 2013
Duane Adams

Good afternoon, Chairman Fischer and members of the committee. My name is Duane Adams; I am the Vice President of Field and Equine Services for the Dumb Friends League. Together with the Colorado Humane Society we provide assistance to law enforcement in animal cruelty investigations in 25 Counties throughout Colorado. We employ 7 Bureau of Animal Protection agents. The Dumb Friends League also owns and operates the Harmony Equine Center, an impound facility for equine involved in animal cruelty and neglect cases. The center is open only to law enforcement from anywhere in Colorado.

I am here in opposition of House Bill 13-1125. This bill would change existing law, law that exists to prevent and alleviate the unnecessary suffering of animals; not just to extend the life of an animal.

- This bill would hinder law enforcement's ability to enforce animal cruelty law.
- The bill would require law enforcement to leave abused and neglected animals in the care of those who are causing or permitting the animal to suffer.
- The bill would force veterinarians to be the final decision-makers on impoundment yet gives them little guidance as to what constitutes "preserve the life".
- The bill contains conflicts, in that "preserve the life" is a necessary element to impoundment, yet "near death" animals cannot be humanely euthanized unless they are first impounded.
- There is little doubt that if this bill passes it will add additional costs to enforcement agencies and some animals, untreated by the owner, will continue to be left without treatment.

Current law requires that an abused or neglected animal be considered **endangered if it remains with the owner or custodian before it can be impounded**. This bill adds that impoundment must be **necessary to preserve the life of the animal, as determined by a veterinarian**. It does not ask the veterinarian to concur with the decision of the peace officer that the animal is endangered; it grants final decision-making authority to the veterinarian and raises the threshold. Our greatest concern is that no one knows how many animals nor what circumstances fall between the terms "endangered" and "preserve the life of".

A few of the cases CHS has dealt with that could have been affected by this bill;

- 1) Case of a horse in southern Colorado with a fractured leg, endangered? Yes, life preserving? No.
- 2) Case of a badly foundered horse in Elbert County.
- 3) Case of ten horses that were left on the property for ten days without food or water being provided by the owner.
- 4) Case of a foundered horse in Sedgwick County; the veterinarian would not agree that the animal was endangered.

We urge you to vote No on this bill and give the new impoundment law, already in effect since September, a chance to work.







