

I work at a law firm. When our attorneys compose any dispositive motion, thorough legal analysis is crucial to substantiate our claims with relevant case law. The newly suggested bill mandates a similar level of research, albeit not of a legal nature but, in this particular case, scientific research.

I delved into the topic of mandatory sterilization (specifically for dogs) when I adopted a 9-week-old puppy that had not been spayed. During her initial vet appointment, I consulted with two veterinarians, each providing different recommendations on the timing for her spaying. The variance in their opinions stemmed from the conflicting information in the literature. This divergence may arise because the optimal time for spaying and neutering depends on factors such as breed and age. Eliminating the health exemption as proposed by SB 24-045 removes this consideration entirely, imposing a uniform rule for ALL dogs, irrespective of age or breed. Despite this, there is a consensus among prominent animal societies and agencies in the United States that early sterilization is not endorsed.

American Veterinary Medical Association statement

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/avma-policies/dog-and-cat-population-management>

American College of Theriogenologists

<https://www.theriogenology.org/page/PositionStatements#SpayNeuter>

While there are health benefits to spaying and neutering these must be weighed against the health benefits of the sex steroids. In general, the advantages of spaying or neutering a pet include effective population control, decreased aggression, decreased wandering, decreased risk of being hit by a car, and decreased risk of mammary, testicular and ovarian cancer. On the other hand, the disadvantages of spaying or neutering may include increased risk of obesity, diabetes, osteosarcoma, hemangiosarcoma, prostatic adenocarcinoma, transitional cell carcinoma, urinary tract infections, urinary incontinence, autoimmune thyroiditis, hypothyroidism and hip dysplasia. Therefore, the decision to spay or neuter a dog or cat should be made solely by the pet's owner with the direct input of their veterinarian and will be dependent on each particular animal's situation.

I acknowledge that the existing law aims to control excessive dog populations and avoid overcrowding in state animal shelters. **While I support the idea of sterilizing dogs, subjecting a young puppy to sterilization removes essential hormones vital for growth and protection against orthopedic problems, obesity, urinary incontinence, and many fatal cancers.**

Proponents argue that sterilized dogs and cats tend to live longer, exhibit fewer behavioral problems, and have a reduced risk of mammary and testicular cancer due to the procedure.

While there is some validity in their statement, it is crucial to delve into the subtleties of the argument. Some studies have shown that there is an elevated risk of mammary cancer in intact animals. However, it has been found that these claims could be exaggerated, and previous studies on this matter often exhibited a high risk of bias.¹ The likelihood of intact male dogs succumbing

¹ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1748-5827.2011.01220.x>

to testicular cancer was less than 1%, as it is a readily treatable form of cancer (via sterilization).² Although it is established that sterilized animals generally have longer lifespans, the primary cause of death in sterilized dogs, particularly those that are sterilized early in life, is often cancer. Moreover, the breed of the dog significantly influences the optimal age for sterilization, with some breeds having a higher predisposition to certain joint disorders or cancers when sterilized early.³ It's worth noting that most animals returned to shelters were due to issues related to aggression.⁴ Studies indicate that castration does not necessarily diminish fearful or aggressive behaviors directed towards people.⁵ And it has been shown that sterilization as a means of population control did not serve to benefit animal shelters.⁶

Numerous pet owners lack the financial means to cover the elevated expenses linked to the care of small animals. If SB 24-045 is approved, these costs are likely to increase. Vets may face a surge in demand for appointments, as rescues will be compelled to sterilize all pets prior to adoption, resulting in extended waiting times. This, in turn, affects pet owners seeking veterinary services for other various reasons, including routine checkups, orthopedic issues, infections/parasites, care for the geriatric population, cancer, and more.

Furthermore, this legislation does not prevent breeders and puppy mills from adjusting their spay/neuter criteria. I urge you to consider why this law exclusively targets shelters and rescues. The existing law implies that the legislature views adopters of rescue animals as irresponsible, less informed, and less likely to comply with rules and regulations.

My boxer mix Gypsy underwent sterilization at 8 weeks old. around the age of 9, she started experiencing incontinence issues. According to my vet, such problems are common in female dogs spayed at an early age (before six months). On February 20th, 2023, Gypsy was diagnosed with appendicular osteosarcoma, and my vet conveyed that her time on this earth was severely limited. I spent approximately \$7,500 in an attempt to delay her inevitable passing. She only lived for 162 days following diagnosis. The last week of her life was so distressing and harrowing that my fiancé vowed to never own a dog again.

I cannot definitively say that her osteosarcoma proliferated only because of her early sterilization as cancer is multifactorial. Nonetheless, several studies highlight the harmful consequences associated with early sterilization, particularly in relation to elevated occurrences of osteosarcoma and other life-threatening cancers. These studies indicate statistically significant correlations, suggesting that the increased incidents are not mere coincidences related to early sterilization.^{3,7}

Before casting your vote for this bill, I urge you to review the scientific literature. I was unaware of the adverse effects associated with early sterilization in animals. While I still advocate for the

² <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/nutrition-research-reviews/article/neutering-in-dogs-and-cats-current-scientific-evidence-and-importance-of-adequate-nutritional-management/EE9069F2CF1060CB2D5D65460BA8E8E1>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7359819/>

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8044234/>

⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9330254/>

⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6940997/>

⁷ <https://aacrjournals.org/cebp/article/11/11/1434/166639/Endogenous-Gonadal-Hormone-Exposure-and-Bone>

sterilization of companion animals, it is essential to recognize that the timing of the procedure plays a pivotal role in promoting a dog's overall healthspan and lifespan.

Thank you,
Denice Maccani

Hello, my name is Erin Tucker and I come here today to speak on my own behalf and behalf of dogs everywhere. I am an aerospace engineer who works for a large defense contractor who, like you, has to follow a certain ethical and moral standard inside and outside of work. I'm here to tell my story and to help bring engineering logic and understanding to the circumstances surrounding this proposed bill.

I grew up in the upper middle class where I never wanted for anything. I owned dogs since I was 10 years old. We always started with puppies and raised them in our house to fit our life. My parents were always adamant about purebred dogs. It was never explained to me. We would get labs from hunting houses and we got a golden retriever from an AKC registered breeder. She was gorgeous – a stunning and absolutely perfect replication of a golden retriever. Her name was Kaylee. We were going to show her and breed her, so we never fixed her. My parents knew nothing about what went into breeding or raising puppies, so it was very convenient that we never took her to a show or bred her. She never left the yard and I am very thankful that we never had to deal with an accidental litter. When she was 5 years old she got rage. Rage is a seizure disorder that results in unknown attacks. This disorder is prevalent in inbreeding. It first came about in cocker spaniels and then in golden retrievers due to their popularity and need to breed to meet the demand. Rage is non-discriminatory and the onset is not immediate. She would attack our other dog as a result and due to the seizure quality of the condition would show no knowledge of the attack after the fact so training was absolutely out of the question. We were scared she was going to turn on us. So we got her fixed and gave her up to the Golden Retriever Rescue of the Rockies. We fully disclosed the situation and said she should not go to a house with other dogs. I found out after the fact they placed her in a house with another dog.

When I grew up and left the house on my own through college I had my own dog. A purebred Toy Manchester Terrier puppy that I wanted so desperately from watching the AKC Westminster Dog show every year. He had an underbite and since that affected the breed standard, he was required to be fixed and not allowed to be shown. That's fine, he was the best companion anyone could've asked for and got me through the hardest times of my life. But since I didn't have a lot of time to socialize him (Aerospace Engineering is a demanding degree track)

he didn't get along well with older dogs, but he did do fine with puppies. Something about how they smelled and he would give them a 'pass' for being young.

When I moved into my own house in 2017 I got a border collie puppy. I always wanted the #1 smartest breed. And doing as I had done my entire life, it had to be purebred from a breeder. Well, this one was off of craigslist, but she was purebred. That's when I learned what an accidental litter was. Even though both of her parents are purebred and registered, if the owners don't tell the registering organization that they are *planning* to have a litter of puppies then they can't be registered. These 11 puppies that resulted from "losing track of the dogs" were born in Amarillo, Texas. When these people brought their 11 puppies to Colorado in a truck barely big enough to fit their family and all 11 puppies were on the floor of the front seat passenger I asked them why they brought them to Colorado. They told me that Colorado is a safe place for them to give up these dogs, where they will find good homes that will treat them well, because Amarillo is a dog fighting town. I said 'but they're border collies, they aren't used for dog fighting'. To which they replied 'they're the perfect bait dog, they're submissive and fast.' She was my first rescue. I corrected every mistake I made with my first dog. She was well socialized and well trained. Even my agility trainer said 'it's too bad she's fixed because I would love one of her babies'. But she didn't get fixed until she was 18 months old. My friends wanted to breed their heeler/border collie mix to her and I thought having puppies would be fun. They had ties to riders in the Westernaires and we could easily find these puppies homes, even though they obviously wouldn't be papered. I started to look into it. Female dogs go into heat twice a year. Typically spring and fall, but that's not a guarantee. They spend a week bleeding and then 7-10 days in an ovulation cycle. In order for a male to breed with a female it lasts roughly an hour where they are stuck together. It is not comfortable for either party and usually results in a lot of high pitched whining and barking from the male and sometimes the female. After the hour, sometimes the dogs need to be separated manually, and both dogs are very sore after separation. But if you want the female to take you have to let them go through this pain and process for the hour. Then the female is pregnant for 2 months. That's it 2 months. It's no wonder most people don't know that their dog is pregnant until they're having babies in their living room. After researching the

work behind having a litter I asked my friends that if they want their dog to 'get his rocks off' to help better his behavior at home, I'd want them to help take care of the puppies. Not financially, but physically just help put in the man hours taking care of them. I didn't hear from them on the subject again.

This was the point where I realized I definitely didn't want to have a litter of puppies by myself. But I wanted to help, within my means. So I looked up puppy rescues in Colorado and naturally came across the Colorado Puppy Rescue (CPR) that was conveniently 15 minutes from my house. One of the requirements of fostering with them was that my own dogs be fixed. So I got my dog fixed at 18 months.

I did the foster orientation and fostered for a couple months and just kept getting more and more involved until I became a trained Adoption Counselor. I've been facilitating adoptions now for 5 years, including virtually during the pandemic. The reason I started fostering with CPR is because they allowed flexibility with my demanding career. I was able to pick up puppies on Wednesday night and drop them off on Saturday morning. With my work schedule this allowed me to be home more with the puppies. The first few times when I returned the puppies I cried in my car on the way home. We all do. It takes a very specific type of person to foster. It's hard. It's hard emotionally. My mantra was always 'if I keep them, I can't help save more'. Because it's true. Colorado Puppy Rescue is 100% foster based, they don't have the sanctions/licenses in place to keep any of the puppies overnight in the facility. They all go home with a human to be cared for until the next event. But it's still hard to cuddle a puppy for 3 days and give it up. This is the reason I got more involved, to be able to talk with the people who are taking home my puppy (and do the same for other fosters that are not as extroverted as I am). After 5 years of being an Adoption Counselor I can answer any question you have.

For instance, I can tell you all of our dogs get seen by 2 vets. 1 vet on the New Mexico border that we have been partnering with for over a decade to make sure all dogs are healthy getting into our transport, and have the required vaccinations to cross the border into Colorado (like Rabies for dogs 3 months and older), and another vet in Colorado to comply with the new health related exemption in the law. I know 3 days doesn't seem like enough before these pups get adopted but it

is. In 3 days, because these pups are kept in homes, a cough will be heard, a yucky poop will be identified, and those puppies that need treatment will NOT go up for adoption that week. If that isn't enough, the adoption contract has a 9 day health clause built into it. For the occasions where a puppy has only been in our care for 3 days prior to adoption, if the puppy gets sick for any reason the adopter can return it within 9 days for a full refund so we can treat it. Then they have the ability to readopt their dog once it is well again. The incubation period for parvo is 10 days. Between the 3 days in foster care under the watchful eye of a human and the 9 days in the contract, this more than covers the incubation period of parvo and guarantees responsible treatment of the condition by the rescue.

Additionally, there is a spay/neuter deposit required for every adoption of a puppy under 5 months of age (all those 5 months and older are fixed prior to adoption). This deposit is similar to any other deposit & requires proof of spay/neuter to get it back. This is well discussed with the adopters at the adoption events and included in the contract. This ensures not only do the puppies get fixed, but also that we have spay/neuter paperwork required by PACFA to prove they have indeed been sterilized at an appropriate age.

Recently, I was blessed with the ability to witness the other side of the fence, literally. I had a neighbor move in to my adjoining back yard in July. They moved in with 3 dogs – a pitbull, a Belgian Malinois and a mastiff mix puppy. Within 2 weeks, they brought home a husky puppy and within another week one of that husky's puppy siblings. This brought the total of dogs to 5. I knew this was illegal and called animal control. Animal control issued a citation but could do nothing to force them to give up the dogs because of the laws currently in place. A couple months later, the 2 huskies got into a fight in the backyard, drawing blood. I called animal control again. They issued another citation to have the dogs seen by a vet, but could not enforce anything unless there was severe life or death injury. At one point their pitbull got out of the house and was hit and killed by a car on a nearby busy roadway. They brought home a new Doberman puppy within a week. These dogs were left in the backyard all day, every day, and most nights to bark and disturb the neighbors. Many neighbors called animal control or the non-emergency police line regarding these poor dogs. Unfortunately the law requires bark logs and multiple neighbors coordinating with cameras in order to enforce any law regarding this behavior. In the meantime they brought home a german

shepherd puppy. At this point, with a new complaint to animal control regarding 6 dogs in this house with video and picture evidence, a new animal control officer was involved. She was more forthcoming with information to us witnesses and we learned even more. Of the 6 dogs in this house, there were 3 males and 3 females and none of them were fixed. The males were able to breed but 2 of the 3 females were not yet 6 months and as far as we knew had not yet entered a heat cycle. With 5 of these animals very clearly identified as their breed and likely purebred it was clear what the owner motivation was here and what would happen with the dogs that were left in the backyard all day, unsupervised. Unfortunately, the animal control officer could only provide another citation for too many dogs and ask them to get their dogs sterilized. The animal control officer admitted to me that she has absolutely no way to enforce this under the law and it is not illegal for them to have puppies regardless of the situation. Will this new bill being proposed today fix this issue? Absolutely not. There is nothing to prevent my neighbor from breeding dogs in his house when law enforcement has no law for them to enact. What we need is laws that animal control officers can enforce in these situations.

For those of you who may not follow the history of this law that is being amended in this bill, the sterilization requirement by all rescues upon adoption went into effect in 2019. At first, upon reading it, the Colorado Puppy Rescue director, Kristen, thought we were really going to have to sterilize all the puppies on their way out the door. We have always had a deposit to require proof of spay or neuter by 6 months in the adoption contract, but this new change required it to happen prior to getting adopted. Upon further examination of the law and consultations, it was found that for the health exemption, if we had a Colorado vet examine every individual puppy and sign paperwork for every individual puppy we could continue to operate as we did. So we did. We make sure that every puppy brought into our rescue gets a second examination by a Colorado vet and individual paperwork. It's a lot of extra work and requires additional fees but it's worth it. Many other organizations didn't do the research and didn't orchestrate the extra steps to exercise the health exemption, so they are sterilizing puppies at 8 weeks old. There are only 2-3 rescues left in the state that are not. This has not stopped the influx of animals from states like Texas, Kansas,

Oklahoma and New Mexico as they don't have spay/neuter laws like we do – but it has helped us save countless rescued animals.

It is my understanding that at least one of the sponsors of this bill believes by requiring the last 2-3 rescues in this state to spay and neuter their puppies at adoption, it will prevent the influx of animals. If it didn't stop in 2019, requiring the last few to spay at 8 weeks old won't stop it now.

It is also my understanding that the same sponsor of this bill Rep. Taggart believes that this will better support veterinarians that are overwhelmed by the additional animals being adopted in this state. I can tell you this bill will not change the amount of vet visits that occur in this state, because it won't prevent the amount of animals brought into the state – either by rescues, breeders, or craigslisters. If anything it will create more vet visits by increasing issues stemming from long term effects of early sterilization, which we have yet to see because the original law went into effect less than 5 years ago. The first animals subject to this change are not even 5 years old yet – so it's not been enough time to see 'long term' effects from these early procedures. What we need to do is help support the vet industry.

My sister has worked as a receptionist at an emergency vet for several years and hearing the stories she has - it is no wonder to me that the veterinary industry has the highest percentage of suicides. She originally took the job because she was applying to vet tech programs and thought it would be a good experience to help her solidify her place in the industry. However, she experienced the worst humans. When she wouldn't book an appointment or let a vet visit with a perfectly healthy dog that the owner wanted to have euthanized for convenience, he cussed her out and threatened to 'take it out back and shoot it'. He put that death on her. After this experience, she decided she would no longer want to be in the industry. She has recently taken a job working for the geological survey. In addition to poor treatment by humans while trying to advocate for animals that can't speak for themselves, vet school is the hardest to get into – even harder than med school and without the big paycheck. So we just have a shortage of vets. If you really want to help the veterinary industry – provide grants and stipends to support them – generate ways to entice people to do the job. It's a rough job and these advocates aren't supporting the people doing the work.

Veterinarians and vet techs need your support more than the last 2-3 rescues need to be sterilizing puppies.

Lastly, I'll leave you with some additional information. Colorado Puppy Rescue and Lifeline Puppy Rescue bring in roughly the same amount of puppies every year. Both organizations refer to their puppies by number to properly keep track of them with paperwork and to avoid duplication of names (how many "Cooper"s or "Tucker"s do you know?) and to allow the adopter to give their own name to their puppy. However Lifeline is sterilizing their puppies as young as 8 weeks old, or holding adopted dogs until they are sterilized at 9-10 weeks old. So this new update will not affect the influx and has been proven to not changed the influx of dogs into Colorado. Lifeline also has licenses in place allowing their puppies to stay overnight in their facility so they don't get as much human interaction and still have the same adoption rate. Colorado Puppy Rescue takes in puppies from 1 day old (0 days if you count the ones that are birthed by pregnant moms in our care) to 10+ years old. We are not just a puppy rescue, but that is what the majority of our fosters are looking to care for, and since we aren't allowed to keep pups in the facility overnight that's what we primarily bring in. The average amount of time one of our puppies stays with us is 21 days. This is because we bring in 2-6 week old puppies that need to be taken care of for much longer than 3 days prior to adoption at a minimum of 8 weeks, and 2 year old dogs that mark or bark and end up in foster care for 1+ months before a kind soul takes them in.

Remember: Colorado's state dog is the rescue dog. If you don't want people to see Colorado as a safe haven for those poor puppies that are found in a cardboard box in a dumpster in Texas, you should change that first.

House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources
02/26/2024 01:30 PM
SB24-045 Mods to Sterilization Reqmnts for Cats & Dogs
Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
<p>Stacy Garberich Against themselves</p>	<p>I am writing as both a private citizen and animal rescue advocate, and would like to express my extreme concern for the lack of information being considered in SB24-045.</p> <p>first, there are no medical professionals opinions being considered in this matter. Spay and neuter prior to eight weeks old is inhumane and comes with risk of Laylon complications, including higher rate of cancer, poor muscle tone and continents for bone density, particularly in large breed. None of this is being considered in this bill. Second dogs and cats will die in shelter strictly due to the lack of veterinary appointments, available, and overworked veterinary staff. In 2018 regulation requires spay neuter with the health exemptions caused the cost of Spain neuter in Colorado to skyrocket currently a spay neuter in Colorado is between 250 and \$800. There is also a blatant discrimination in this bill, not in what it says, but in what it does not say. People who adopt dogs from shelters and rescues cannot be trusted to spay neuter their pets; people who buy dog breeders can be trusted. The regulations were already written such that shelters and rescues have a different set of rules, the breeders and pet stores are free to sell their dogs without any such rules requiring them to have their pets undergo surgery at a premature age. There is currently a small loophole that cost rescues a fortune in vet, bills, but allows people who are educated in the risk of juvenile span neuter to have each pet examined for the readiness for spay neuter, and allow the vet to write an exemption based on the pets individual health. That will be removed from this bill for shelters and rescues only. Breeders and pet stores are still free to sell dogs for thousands of dollars without fixing them at all. Or having a vet see them to write such an exemption. This is a discrimination and it's evident know it will push people who would have otherwise rescue dogs over to breeders because breeders don't have a health risk associated with juvenile spay and neuter.</p> <p>Why are rescues and shelter, pets, and the citizens who support them being treated as second-class citizens? If this legislation is indeed necessary for the welfare of animals, then it should be applied to all licenses under PACFA. If it does not apply to all, then it's either a discriminatory, unnecessary or just blatant ignorance. Thank you for your time.</p>

<p>Kristen Fallert Against themselves</p>	<p>As both a private citizen and an animal rescue advocate, I express profound concern regarding the lack of comprehensive information considered in SB24-045: Modifications to Sterilization Requirements for Cats & Dogs.</p> <p>Firstly, the absence of input from medical professionals is alarming. Juvenile spaying/neutering poses grave risks, such as heightened cancer rates, muscle tone issues, incontinence, and diminished bone density, especially in larger dog breeds. None of these risks are acknowledged in the bill.</p> <p>Secondly, the extended wait times for veterinary appointments necessitate urgent attention. The potential bill for implementation of Telehealth visits for veterinarians underscores this urgency. The legislation could exacerbate shelter populations due to delayed appointments, leading to unnecessary euthanasia. Additionally, the 2018 regulation spiked spaying/neutering costs in Colorado, compelling rescues to seek procedures elsewhere, causing financial strain on Colorado veterinarians.</p> <p>Lastly, the bill exhibits blatant discrimination by placing disproportionate burdens on shelters and rescues. While these entities face stringent rules, breeders and pet stores evade such regulations. The proposed removal of the exemption provision for shelters and rescues perpetuates this unequal treatment. This disparity in treatment favors breeders and pet stores, likely driving potential adopters towards them.</p> <p>Why are rescue and shelter pets, and their advocates, treated as inferior? If the legislation truly aims to safeguard animal welfare, it must apply universally to all PACFA licensees—shelters, rescues, pet stores, and breeders. Failure to do so suggests discrimination and sheer oversight.</p> <p>I urge thorough consideration of these concerns. Thank you for your time and attention.</p>
<p>JENNIFER HOFFMAN Against themselves</p>	<p>I am writing as both a private citizen and animal rescue advocate and would like to express my extreme concern for the lack of animal health risks being considered in SB24-045: Modifications to Sterilization Requirements for Cats & Dogs.</p> <p>I am hoping that you will look at this legislation, and those who are promoting it, critically.</p> <p>There appear to be no medical professionals' opinions being considered in this matter. Early spay/neuter comes with documented risks of lifelong complications including higher rates of cancer, poor muscle tone, incontinence, and poor bone density - particularly in</p>

	<p>larger breed dogs. None of this is considered in the bill, and all of these negative side effects make dogs more likely to end up in the shelter system, and less likely to be adopted, exacerbating the overcrowding issues that we are trying to solve with rescue.</p> <p>Additionally, and of utmost importance, is the blatant discrimination in this bill. The regulations are already written that have shelters and rescues following one set of rules, and breeders and pet stores have another, more lenient, set of rules - with no regulations or demands on spay/neuter. Under the changes proposed, breeders and pet stores are still free to sell dogs for thousands of dollars without neutering them. This is blatant discrimination against rescue organizations.</p> <p>Why are only rescue and shelter pets, and the citizens who support them, being unfairly burdened with these regulations? If this legislation is indeed necessary for the welfare of animals in our state, then it should be applied to all licensees under PACFA -- shelters, rescues, AND retail stores and breeders; if it doesn't, then it's either intended to be intentionally discriminatory against rescues or unnecessary at all.</p> <p>I appreciate your time and consideration</p>
<p>Linda Straw Against themselves</p>	<p>I am a private citizen and animal rescue advocate and would like to express my extreme concern for the lack of information being considered in this bill.</p> <p>1) There are no medical professionals' opinions being considered. Spay/neuter prior to 8 weeks old is inhumane and comes with risks of lifelong complications such as higher rates of cancer, poor muscle tone, incontinence, and poor bone density particularly in larger breed dogs.</p> <p>2) The wait times for vet appointments are so extended that there's current legislation being considered to allow Telehealth visits for veterinarians. More dogs and cats will die in shelters due to this legislation because rescues will be waiting on vet appointments. The 2018 regulation requiring spay/neuter with a health exemption caused the cost of spay/neuter in Colorado to skyrocket; currently, a spay/neuter in Colorado for a puppy is between \$250 and \$800; in Oklahoma and Texas, it's \$75-\$150. Rescues and shelters will be forced to perform these procedures in the origin state of the pets and not with Colorado veterinarians if this passes - a significant loss of revenue for Colorado vets.</p> <p>3) This is blatant discrimination towards rescues/shelters with regard to spay/neuter procedures. Regulations were already written such that shelters and rescues have a different set of rules and breeders</p>

	<p>and pet stores are free to sell their dogs without any rules requiring them to have pets undergo surgery at a premature age. There is currently a loophole that costs rescues a fortune in vet bills, but it allows people who are educated in the risks of juvenile spay/neuter to have each pet examined for their readiness for spay/neuter and allow the vet to write an exemption based on the pet's individual health. That will be removed in this bill for shelters/rescues ONLY. Breeders and pet stores are still free to sell dogs without fixing them at all, or having a vet write an exemption. This is discrimination and it's evident in the lobbying efforts: breeder lobbyists know it will push people who would have otherwise rescued dogs to go to breeders because they don't have to deal with the health risks associated with juvenile spay/neuter.</p> <p>Rescue/shelter pets and the people who support them are being treated as second-class citizens. If this legislation is necessary for the welfare of animals then it should be applied to all licensees under PACFA: shelters, rescues, AND breeders; if not, it's discriminatory, unnecessary, or just blatant ignorance.</p>
<p>Ashley Chymiy Against themselves</p>	<p>Forcing rescues to neuter or spay puppies and young dogs before adoption is well intended but threatens the health of dogs across Colorado and saddles Colorado families with huge expenses later in a dog's life. Every legitimate veterinary association endorses making the decision of when to spay/neuter with a qualified veterinarian.</p> <p>The American Veterinary Medical Association "promotes the professional judgment of the veterinarian in developing an informed, case by case assessment of each individual patient, taking into account all the potential risks and benefits of spay/neuter."</p> <p>According to the AAHA Canine Life Stage Guidelines, "The decision on when to spay a large-breed female dog is based on many factors—your veterinarian can help narrow down the recommended window of 5 to 15 months depending on a dog's disease risk and lifestyle."</p> <p>My 90-lb female dog had urinary incontinence issues her whole life due to an early spay, but we were able to wait to spay our new puppy at seven months per our veterinarians's direction BECAUSE of the way things are now. Please, don't change them.</p> <p>Rescue animals deserve the same shot at a long healthy life as pure breeds. Don't contribute to the myth that a dog from a breeder is healthier or safer. Don't incentivize families to go to a breeder instead of a rescue or shelter. Allow rescues and families to consult with veterinarians on the timing of spay/neuter, and allow puppies to find loving homes even if they're not spayed or neutered, as long as they</p>

	<p>have approval from a qualified veterinarian to wait until the right time.</p>
<p>Lisa Maus Against themselves</p>	<p>Based on the bill as written, dogs will be required to be spayed or neutered at the time of their adoption, without any veterinary exception, unless it is expected to kill the dog.</p> <p>Therefore, in a scenario where a healthy 8 week old puppy is adopted, it will need to be spayed or neutered at 8 weeks old.</p> <p>There is scientific research stating that s/n of a dog that young has extremely detrimental impacts to their future health. Veterinarians back the recommendation of waiting until a dog has reached a certain age (typically around 6 months). Spaying or neutering too early leads to 2-4 times greater likelihood of developing joint disorders, ligament ruptures, and cancers including hemangiosarcoma, lymphoma, and mast cell tumors.</p> <p>Can you please help me to understand how this approach considers or strikes any balance with the future health risks to the animal? This approach is directly subjecting that 8 week puppy to significantly higher health risks, with no exception.</p> <p>The implications of this bill are not just hurting the dogs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It will actually create the wrong reaction by encouraging people NOT to adopt dogs that are already alive and in need of homes, and instead incentivize breeders to produce more dogs and increase the dog population further. 2. If you are concerned with vets being overwhelmed, this will exacerbate that problem by having more dogs dealing with unnecessary health problems for the rest of their life, because of a government-imposed s/n operation before it is medically appropriate. <p>I strongly support s/n of all dogs due to the significant overpopulation problem... but when the time is right, at 6 months or older, as advised by vets.</p> <p>If you really want to solve the population problem, I would love to see greater restrictions over breeders and puppy mills, and requirements for s/n of all dogs in Colorado, at the appropriate age. This should be the case whether they are adopted, sourced from a breeder, or from a pet store.</p>
<p>Christina Cosentini Against</p>	<p>My objection to this legislation is based on my many experiences adopting rescue dogs. Presently I have two female rescues; one of</p>

<p>themselves</p>	<p>which was spayed at the time of adoption at approximately 8 weeks of age, the second adopted at 6 months and due to her breed and potential size was spayed following her first heat at approximately 11 months of age.</p> <p>The dog spayed at 8 weeks has urinary problems and incontinence and has shown early signs of hip dysplasia. The dog spayed at 11 months has no urinary issues and no signs of hip dysplasia or other growth abnormalities.</p> <p>The legislation makes a blatant assumption that owners of reduce dogs cannot be trusted to treat their dogs in a manner consistent with current legislation.</p> <p>This legislation is harmful to the health of dogs and ignores recent research demonstrating the harm early neuter does to the physical development of canines.</p> <p>Please reject this legislation.</p>
<p>Andrew McLellan Against themselves</p>	<p>I am writing as both a private citizen and animal rescue advocate to express my extreme concern for the lack of information being considered in SB24-045: Modifications to Sterilization Requirements for Cats & Dogs.</p> <p>I am asking you to vote AGAINST this bill.</p> <p>There are no medical professionals' opinions considered in this matter. Spay/neuter before 8 weeks old is inhumane and comes with risks of lifelong complications including higher rates of cancer, poor muscle tone, incontinence, and poor bone density particularly in larger breed dogs.</p> <p>This bill is highly discriminatory against rescues who are trying to save puppies from being euthanized. This bill's unfair bias is that people who adopt dogs from shelters and rescues cannot be trusted to spay and neuter their pets; but people who buy dogs from breeders can be.</p> <p>The regulations were already written such that shelters and rescues have a different set of rules, and breeders and pet stores are free to sell their dogs without any such rules requiring them to have their pets undergo surgery at a premature age. There is currently a small loophole that costs rescues a fortune in vet bills, but it allows people who are educated in the risks of juvenile spay/neuter to have each pet examined for their readiness for spay/neuter and allow the vet to write an exemption based on the pet's individual health.</p> <p>That will be removed in this bill for shelters and rescues ONLY. Breeders and pet stores are still free to sell dogs for thousands of dollars without fixing them at all or having a vet see them to write</p>

	<p>such an exemption. This is discrimination and it's evident in the lobbying efforts: breeder lobbyists can't wait for this to pass, because they know it will push people who would have otherwise rescued dogs over to breeders because breeders don't have the health risks associated with juvenile spay/neuter.</p> <p>Why are rescue and shelter pets and the citizens who support them being treated as second-class citizens? If this legislation is indeed necessary for the welfare of animals, then it should be applied to all licensees under PACFA -- shelters, rescues, AND breeders; if it doesn't, then it's either discriminatory, unnecessary, or just blatant ignorance.</p> <p>Please do NOT pass this bill.</p>
<p>Krista Frank Against themselves</p>	<p>The American Veterinary Medical Association states "...there is no single recommendation concerning gonadectomy that is appropriate for every dog. There are just too many variables to account for, including breed, sex, age, and body type. Whether to spay or neuter must therefore be decided on a case-by-case basis."</p> <p>The American Animal Hospital Association recommends that "small-breed dogs... should be neutered at six months of age or spayed prior to the first heat (five to six months). Large-breed dogs... should be neutered after growth stops.... Your veterinarian can help narrow down the recommended window of 5 to 15 months depending on your dog's disease risk and lifestyle."</p> <p>The AVMA and AAHA recommend consulting a veterinarian about when to spay or neuter each individual animal. We trust those purchasing from breeders and pet stores - who intentionally produce new pets - to make this decision responsibly; yet this bill would strike that choice from those adopting from shelters and rescues.</p> <p>Current law allows collection of a spay/neuter deposit, so owners can fix pets in consultation with their veterinarian. Is there evidence to suggest that this practice is not working? This broad brush change mandates a standard of care for shelter and rescue animals less than that recommended by our veterinary medical societies. Might we instead strengthen enforcement of existing requirements, allowing sterilization at a medically-appropriate age?</p>

	<p>Responsible action requires due diligence; where are the problems in the system that lead to pet overpopulation, and what actions will address those problems without creating unexpected new ones?</p> <p>Targeting shelter and rescue dogs as a blanket solution will solve nothing if the current system is already working for this population, and may have unintended consequences for those animals, and the system as a whole.</p> <p>I request that the legislature:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Acquire relevant data to identify which source pet populations are under-sterilized and focus legislative efforts there; 2) Solicit expert veterinary testimony; 3) Speak directly with rescues who would be impacted to understand and address their concerns; 4) Apply regulations consistently regardless of source - rescue, breeder or pet store, Colorado or abroad; 5) Consider possible unwanted consequences of this bill on the whole system. <p>Only by working together with experts and all impacted parties to identify problems and their root causes can we hope to solve them.</p>
<p>amber otis Against self</p>	<p>I have been a foster and volunteer for a number of local rescues, I have firsthand witnessed the negative affects of spaying and neutering too young. Most specifically when a young girl had body parts seeping through there staples after a bumpy transport. While I absolutely want the public to spay and neuter their pets, if not recommended due to age by a vet, it should end there. Blatantly leaving out breeders and the little pet shop of horrors makes no sense at all, and I would love to hear any justifiable reasoning behind this.</p>
<p>Meaghan Flynn Against themselves</p>	<p>I am writing as both a private citizen and animal rescue advocate to express my extreme concern for the lack of information being considered in SB24-045: Modifications to Sterilization Requirements for Cats & Dogs.</p> <p>I am asking you to vote AGAINST this bill.</p> <p>There are no medical professionals' opinions considered in this matter. Spay/neuter before 8 weeks old is inhumane and comes with risks of lifelong complications including higher rates of cancer, poor muscle tone, incontinence, and poor bone density particularly in larger breed dogs.</p> <p>This bill is highly discriminatory against rescues who are trying to save puppies from being euthanized. This bill's unfair bias is that</p>

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<p>Lauren Spann Against themselves</p>	<p>I am writing as both a private citizen and animal rescue advocate to express my extreme concern for the lack of information being considered in SB24-045: Modifications to Sterilization Requirements for Cats & Dogs.</p> <p>I am asking you to vote AGAINST this bill.</p> <p>There are no medical professionals' opinions considered in this matter. Spay/neuter before 8 weeks old is inhumane and comes with risks of lifelong complications including higher rates of cancer, poor muscle tone, incontinence, and poor bone density particularly in larger breed dogs.</p> <p>This bill is highly discriminatory against rescues who are trying to save puppies from being euthanized. This bill's unfair bias is that people who adopt dogs from shelters and rescues cannot be trusted</p>

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<p>Shawn Spann Against themselves</p>	<p>I am writing as both a private citizen and animal rescue advocate to express my extreme concern for the lack of information being considered in SB24-045: Modifications to Sterilization Requirements for Cats & Dogs.</p> <p>I am asking you to vote AGAINST this bill.</p> <p>There are no medical professionals' opinions considered in this matter. Spay/neuter before 8 weeks old is inhumane and comes with risks of lifelong complications including higher rates of cancer, poor muscle tone, incontinence, and poor bone density particularly in larger breed dogs.</p> <p>This bill is highly discriminatory against rescues who are trying to save puppies from being euthanized. This bill's unfair bias is that people who adopt dogs from shelters and rescues cannot be trusted</p>

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<p>Cameron Lund Against themselves</p>	<p>This legislation is quite frankly targeting the people trying to solve the issues of animal overpopulation, rather than those causing the problem. Shelters and rescues will not be helped by this, and it will cause a tremendous amount of harm will come from this. Untold numbers of animals will die because rescues will not be able to take them in, shelters will be flooded with pets suffering from the harsh and dangerous side effects of juvenile spays and neuters. Consider how many puppies are dropped off for "biting" while they are teething, and then consider how many will be dropped off due to spay incontinence from having major surgery at 8 weeks old. This proposal also fails to consider how many animals are coming from puppy mills for pet stores and lazy breeders. Rescues and shelters regularly take in and pay the medical treatments for sick puppies that breeders don't want to care for, or just can't sell and are tired of caring for. The goal of every shelter and rescue I've ever talked to or worked with is to someday not be needed because every pet has a</p>

	home and comes from a responsible breeder. Thank you for your consideration.
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My name is Jenna Bryant and I am a 19-year-old college student and concerned rescue volunteer. I am testifying regarding my concern for shelter animals and the health complications they will face with the passage of this bill.

I am a volunteer for Colorado Puppy Rescue, an organization that pulled me out of a very dark place when I needed something worth fighting for and found it in these helpless animals. These animals saved me, and it's my turn to fight to save them from a bill looking to remove a concern for their health with sterilization.

I've seen so many dogs go through our shelter and I have seen the effects of failure to spay and neuter animals. I agree that it's a problem that needs to be tackled, but this bill is approaching the problem from all of the wrong directions. The first problem, of course, is that it removes the exemption from sterilization due to an animal's health. A simple search will show you that the American Kennel Club recommends 6 to 9 months of age for sterilization for smaller dogs and as long as 12 to 18 months for larger ones.

Sterilization earlier than the recommended age can result in a variety of health consequences including incontinence, increased risk of cancer, and delayed closing of growth plates that may result in hip and joint problems. Not only does this pose a threat to the quality of life of the animal, but it increases the risk that the animal will end up in the shelter once more when the consequences become apparent and unexpected costs arise.

Further, if a bill like this is to be imposed upon shelters, there is no reason for pet stores that source from puppy mills and backyard breeders to be exempt. Those dogs are used to breed and produce profit and it is becoming increasingly more common for these breeders to come to rescues with their dogs that aren't selling or are born with complications. Before rescues are punished for irresponsible human behavior, the problem needs to be attacked at the source: people intentionally breeding dogs.

Lastly, this bill will keep puppies in shelters longer if rescues opt to preserve their health by waiting to sterilize them before adopting. Rescues hire vets to acquire proper opinions affirming that sterilization should come at a later date, and I know that Colorado Puppy Rescue follows up with adopters to confirm that the sterilization occurs by the age recommended by a vet. Rescues will have to choose whether they must wait to sterilize and keep fosters occupied, keeping hundreds if not thousands more dogs on euthanasia lists in the shelters they pull from. Or, they can knowingly risk the health of their puppies to get them to their forever homes in a more timely manner for bonding and socializing. Either way, this will ultimately hurt rescues and their animals and ignore the source of the problem.

For the safety of puppies, kittens, dogs, and cats, and the continued success of rescues to save the animals who can't save themselves, I urge you to vote in negation of bill SB24-045 to make modifications to sterilization requirements.

I am writing as both a private citizen and an animal rescue advocate and would like to express my extreme concern for the lack of information being considered in SB24-045

First, there are no medical professionals' opinions being considered in this matter. Spaying/neutering prior to 8 weeks old is inhumane and comes with risks of lifelong complications, including higher rates of cancer, poor muscle tone, incontinence, and poor bone density, particularly in larger breed dogs. None of this is considered in the bill.

Second, the wait times for vet appointments are already so extended that there's current legislation being considered that allows Telehealth visits for veterinarians. I cannot stress this enough: more dogs and cats will die in shelters strictly due to this additional and unnecessary legislation because rescues will be waiting on vet appointments. The 2018 regulation requiring spaying/neutering with the health exemption caused the cost of spaying/neutering in Colorado to skyrocket; currently, a spay or neuter in Colorado for a puppy is anywhere between \$250 and \$900; in Oklahoma and Texas, it's \$75-\$150. Many rescues and shelters will be forced to perform these procedures in the originating state of the pets and not with Colorado vets if this passes -- a significant loss of revenue for Colorado veterinarians.

Lastly, and of utmost importance, is the blatant discrimination in this bill, not in what it says but in what it doesn't say: people who adopt dogs from shelters and rescues cannot be trusted to spay and neuter their pets; people who buy dogs from breeders can be trusted to. The regulations were already written such that shelters and rescues have a different set of rules, and breeders and pet stores are free to sell their dogs without any such rules requiring them to have their pets undergo surgery at a premature age. There is currently a small exemption that costs rescues a fortune in vet bills, but it allows people who are educated in the risks of juvenile spaying/neutering to have each pet examined for their readiness for spaying/neutering and allow the vet to write an exemption based on the pet's individual health. That will be removed in this bill for shelters and rescues ONLY. Breeders and pet stores are still free to sell dogs for thousands of dollars without fixing them at all or having a vet see them to write such an exemption. This is discrimination and it's evident in the lobbying efforts: breeder lobbyists can't wait for this to pass because they know it will push people who would have otherwise rescued dogs over to breeders because breeders don't have the health risks associated with juvenile spaying/neutering.

Why are rescue and shelter pets and the citizens who support them being treated as second-class citizens? If this legislation is indeed necessary for the welfare of animals, then it should be applied to all licensees under PACFA -- shelters, rescues, AND breeders; if it doesn't, then it's either discriminatory, unnecessary, or just blatant ignorance.

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