

ANIMAL LAW SECTION

Respectfully submits the following position on:

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HB 4852

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The Animal Law Section is not the State Bar of Michigan itself, but rather a Section which members of the State Bar choose voluntarily to join, based on common professional interest.

The position expressed is that of the Animal Law Section only and is not the position of the State Bar of Michigan.

To date, the State Bar does not have a position on this matter.

The total membership of the Animal Law Section is 185.

The position was adopted after discussion and vote at a scheduled meeting and an electronic discussion and vote for those members not in attendance. The number of members in the decision-making body is 15. The number who voted in favor to this position was 13. The number who voted opposed to this position was 0.

Report on Public Policy Position

Name of Section:

Animal Law Section

Contact person:

Ann M. Griffin

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Bill Number:

[HB 4852](#) (Zemke) Animals; cats; trap-neuter-return program; allow local units of government to establish. Creates new act.

Date position was adopted:

October 15, 2014

Process used to take the ideological position:

Position adopted after discussion and vote both at a scheduled meeting and via email with those not present at the meeting.

Number of members in the decision-making body:

15

Number who voted in favor and opposed to the position:

13 Voted for position

0 Voted against position

0 Abstained from vote

2 Did not vote (absent)

Position:

Support

Explanation of the position, including any recommended amendments:

HB 4852 provides that units of local government may establish a feline TNR (trap-neuter-return) program. For a variety of reasons, most states' statutes, including Michigan's, do not regulate feral cats. As a result, feral cats have become an issue for local government to address. Uncontrolled groups of feral cats, known as colonies, can become a nuisance or a threat to human and/or animal health. Many feline experts and advocates support trap-neuter-return (TNR) to manage these colonies and reduce or eliminate the potential associated nuisance and health risks. These programs utilize private funds to trap, sterilize, and vaccinate feral cats and return them to their habitat. Colony caregivers monitor the cats' health and provide food and water. In this way, the cats are maintained in stable colonies that do not grow or spread disease. This approach is humane, particularly because the cats have become feral as a result of abandonment by humans. Also, because TNR programs are funded privately and control what

otherwise would be rampant feral cat overpopulation, they save public resources. This bill, which explicitly provides that local governments may establish feline TNR programs, encourages a humane and fiscally responsible approach, while also providing for more uniformity among local governments regarding feral cats.

The text of any legislation, court rule, or administrative regulation that is the subject of or referenced in this report.

<http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2013-HB-4852>