Melissa Agard Sargent WI Assembly Representative – District 48 Dane County Supervisor – District 18 (608)-220-2273 cell (608)-226-0960

Prepared Statement to the Madison-Dane County Board of Health February 13, 2014

Madame Chair and members of the Madison-Dane County Board of Health,

I am sorry that I am unable to attend your meeting but I am scheduled to participate in a floor session of the Wisconsin State Assembly this evening. I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of my brief statement concerning Referral #32949 from the Madison Common Council; creating section 23.60 and 23.61, renumbering Section 23.60 to Section 23.90 and amending Section 1.08(3)(a) of the Madison General Ordinances.

We as a community must do everything we can to encourage responsible pet ownership and while this proposed legislation may be well meaning, I believe that it will do nothing to solve problems in our community and may in fact lead to some concerning counter effects. Rather than a thoughtful solution that addresses the encouragement of spaying and neutering of all pets; we see focus on breed specific legislation.

Countless studies and experience from other communities show that it is not specific breeds that are the problem but rather the unfavorable situations are the result of a lack of education and access to affordable veterinary services.

I urge the Board to request the Madison Common Council to go back to the drawing board. Create a work group made up of public health workers, responsible dog owners, veterinarians, dog rescue organizations and the like to develop a more proactive and less reactive approach to the spaying and neutering of all pets in our community.

Thank you,

Representative Melissa Sargent
WI Assembly Representative - District 48
Dane County Supervisor - District 18
Chairperson - Dane County Health and Human Services Committee

Co-Authored by:

Dane County Supervisor Jeremy Levin – District 10
Vice Chairperson – Dane County Health and Human Services Committee

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