



CITY OF HOUSTON

Administration & Regulatory Affairs
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Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
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RE: HB 652 – Relating to Required Notice of Certain Infectious Diseases

Dear Members of the Texas House of Representatives:

BARC Animal Shelter & Adoptions is the City of Houston's Municipal Animal Shelter. The City of Houston has prided itself on annual record-breaking live outcomes for the last decade. Without adoptions and fostering, this dream would never have become a reality to achieve live outcomes in the 90th percentile. Shelter pets have long been stigmatized as flawed and not ideal for a new household family member. BARC, along with all our shelter partners across this great state have worked tirelessly to change this way of thinking.

HB 652 requires notice to adopters of any animal from a shelter. However, the bill establishes a regulatory burden by requiring the tracking of 15 days before and 15 days after an animal leaves the shelter. The bill does not consider that adopters of cats must be notified if a disease is present that only occurs in dogs. This bill will discourage pet adoptions by fueling fears of infectious diseases and perpetuate the stereotype that shelter animals by in large are disease ridden creatures, thus steering potential adopters to purchase animals from another source. As a best practice, BARC does make its adopters aware of the potential for certain risks when adopting a shelter animal. Most shelter related diseases are easily treated, and we provide resources to the adopter for the treatment if and when needed.

This bill would not only make the jobs of all animal shelters much more difficult particularly relating to the 30-day monitoring period, but also cause loss of revenue so essentially necessary to our operation. The revenue generated from adoptions goes back to our communities in the form of low-cost wellness clinics, free spay/neuter events, community outreach and the continuation of adoption events. If passed, this bill will increase the length of stay of animals in our care resulting in higher care costs and more euthanasia of animals. Smaller entities that lack basic funding would be crippled beyond repair due to space restrictions and length of stay requirements.

Respectfully,

Greg Damianoff

Director
BARC Animal Shelter and Adoptions
Administration & Regulatory Affairs Department