

To Whom It May Concern,

Did you know that Texas is the largest killer of dogs and cats in the nation? Our state kills more than double what the next largest state, California, does. As such, I am writing to urge you to support HB 921: Transparency for Texas Animal Shelters and Releasing Agencies that did not get passed in the Texas 85<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session.

As the Executive Director of Austin Pets Alive! For the past 10 years, I have worked closely with the City of Austin to create a No Kill Community. The City of Austin's (and ours as a nonprofit) policy of being transparent is essential to upholding our community involvement which leads to a significant amount of free resources we receive from the volunteers, donors, and the media. A recent independent Economic Impact Study published that \$157,000,000 came into the Austin community as a result of the No Kill policies. No Kill would not have happened without transparency into the outcomes of the animals that entered the shelter.

Since I have seen firsthand how transparency in a government entity has benefitted Austin, I can confidently say that it is essential to creating a humane community where pets matter. 65% of all people view their pets as family members, yet shelters all across Texas round them up and kill them. The public can't change what they can't see.

Transparency of shelter data is a vital step in moving Texas from the worst state in America to the best.

With eight of the nation's largest and most influential animal welfare organizations and foundations recently co-authored a joint position statement on the importance of transparency and sharing key data\*, I am confident to say the Great State of Texas can do better to stay relevant by enacting a transparency law for Texas Animal Shelters and Releasing Agencies. I know transparency has strengthened my operation and it will do the same for other shelters in Texas.

Thank you for your help in advance.

Best regards,

Ellen Jefferson, DVM  
Executive Director, Austin Pets Alive!  
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<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20181004005736/en/National-Animal-Welfare-Leaders-Funders-Is-sue-Position> October 4th, 2018