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MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members
FROM: Representative Brian Ellis *B7C*
DATE: June 6, 2012
SUBJECT: Cosponsor—Legislation providing for actions for costs of care of seized animals

Every year, hundreds of animals which have been abused are seized by law enforcement and are placed in shelters pending prosecution of the responsible persons for animal cruelty. Most often, the shelters are run by private non-profit organizations which rely on donations to operate. Our current law permits the court to enter an order that the perpetrator pay the shelter's cost of caring for the abused animals but only after conviction. In the meantime, the cost of shelter, veterinary care and other expenses accrue and are borne by the shelter, not the owner or defendant. Even though there are often individuals willing to adopt the animal, until the court orders forfeiture after conviction, or the owner consents, the animal must remain in shelter.

I plan to introduce legislation which will fix this inequity by permitting either the prosecutor or the shelter to petition the court for an order requiring the defendant to pay the cost of care of the animal pending prosecution. My bill would require the court to enter an order quickly and if the defendant or owner thereafter does not pay the court ordered amount, forfeiture would enter and the animal would be available for placement in a loving home.

If you would like to join me in sponsoring this legislation, please contact Bethann Gebhart at 787-7686 or at bgebhart@pahousegop.com to be added as a cosponsor.