

Senators Gilbert and Kuipers offered the following concurrent resolution:

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 36.

A concurrent resolution to oppose any state or local efforts to reclassify pet, livestock, or animal owners as "guardians."

Whereas, The Federal Animal Welfare Act (7 USC § 2131 et. seq.) provides for the humane care and treatment of animals for use in research facilities, for exhibition purposes, and as pets. In addition, the state of Michigan enforces licensing and inspection programs to protect the health of domestic animals, livestock, and pets. Ongoing enforcement of anti-cruelty laws also promotes the responsible care of, and deters abuse of, animals; and

Whereas, Michigan's animal industry is essential to Michigan's economy. In 2004, cash receipts from livestock and milk sales totaled over \$2.4 billion. Michigan's cattle and calf inventory was valued at \$1.07 billion as of January 2005. In addition, related expenses to domestic dog and cat, and other pet ownership contributes millions of dollars to Michigan's economy; and

Whereas, The current regulatory framework of federal and state laws is being threatened by a growing movement with an ultimate objective of extending to livestock, pets, and other animals the same or similar legal rights and standing as people. Proponents want to further their objectives by reclassifying pet, livestock, and other animal "owners" as "guardians." Nationwide, twelve cities and towns have adopted ordinances that designate animal owners as "guardians;" and

Whereas, Although marketed as a symbolic gesture, changing the status of animal owners to guardians has enormous legal implications. Dogs, livestock, and other animals would no longer be property under guardianship statutes and owners would no longer "own" the animals. Guardianship statutes would undermine an owner's ability to provide for his/her animals and could permit third parties to petition courts for custody of someone's pet, livestock, or animal. Guardianship statutes could also lead to court challenges by individuals who believe that an animal's owner or veterinarian is not following the proper course of treatment or providing adequate care in the event of illness; and

Whereas, Such initiatives would limit or even eliminate an animal owner's ability to freely choose appropriate treatment for his/her animals, increase the cost of livestock production, and ultimately erode access to affordable and high quality animal health care; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we oppose any state or local efforts to reclassify pet, livestock, or animal owners as "guardians."