

“Speak Out
for
Georgia’s Voiceless”

Use Your **VOTE**
for
Companion Animal Stewardship

HB 788 – Grace’s Law

A Proposed Bill That Will Totally Ban Gas Chambers in Georgia

The Issue

An estimated 11 tax-funded animal control facilities in Georgia use gas chambers to routinely kill unwanted dogs, cats, puppies and kittens. Some are operating illegally; none are operating in full compliance with AVMA recommendations; and *ALL* are unreliable, unsafe, unregulated and inhumane. There is abundant proof that gas chambers:

- Pose a serious health risk and cause immeasurable stress to shelter workers;
- Are a cruel, outmoded method of killing that cause horrific, prolonged suffering before animals die;
- Were banned in Georgia over 20 years ago with 3 exceptions; and
- Must be totally banned NOW – statewide, permanently, and with *no exceptions!*

Background

- **2008 Georgia General Assembly** – HB 1060 introduced and granted one hearing late in session; would have closed the loopholes in 1990 Humane Euthanasia Act (See “Talking Points for HB 788” handout)
- **2009 Session** – HB 1060 rewritten and introduced by Representative Tom Knox; numbered HB 606 and named Grace’s Law after a hound who survived Liberty County’s illegally installed gas chamber in 2006; Senate companion bill, SB 232 (sponsored by Senator Steven Henson) and HB 606 granted hearings by House sub-committee and full Senate Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee; no vote taken in senate; legislation designated “carryover”
- **Upcoming session** (opening January 2010) – HB 606 already rewritten, renumbered HB 788, and ready to drop by Rep. Tom Knox; calls for total ban on gas chambers and designates euthanasia by injection (EBI) administered by a veterinarian or properly trained lay person the only legal method for routine euthanasia of animals in Georgia shelters; read bill at www.legis.ga.gov/legis, (click on “Legislation” and type in HB 788)
- HB 788 assigned to House Science and Technology Committee for 2010 session
- Senator Jack Murphy currently preparing senate companion bill; number TBA

YOU Can Help Pass HB 788 and its Companion Senate Bill!

- Contact your legislators **NOW!** Lawmakers need to begin hearing from constituents **NOW** and continually throughout the 2010 legislative session. (See “Contact your Legislators” handout)
- Contact every member of the 2010 House Science & Technology Committee **NOW**. (See “House Science & Technology” matrix handout)
- Tell your friends, family members and co-workers to do the same **NOW**.

***Send the clear, but polite, message that you support HB 788 and are telling everyone you know to do the same.
Let them know you want every gas chamber in Georgia rendered inoperable and demolished!***

GEORGIA VOTERS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

To ban gas chambers *statewide, permanently and with no exceptions*, use your voice and your vote to support

HB 788

It is critical that you begin contacting your legislators NOW to prepare for the 2010 General Assembly session.

- **To find your Senator and Representative** and their contact information, access “Roll Call” at: <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/home>.
- Enter your zip code under “State and Elected Officials” in the left-hand column of the page.
- When the new screen appears, click on the highlighted names of Governor, Senate or House of Representatives. (They appear under the “Governor and State Legislators” heading in the middle of the page, right hand column.) Your legislator’s picture, biographical, contact and other information will appear.
- **Or**, you can access the same information at: <http://www.legis.state.ga.us/>
- **To find your local elected officials** (city and/or county council/commission members), “Google” your city/county and go to their official home pages – most have one – where members are usually featured.
- **Make sure you contact every member of the Science and Technology Committee as well.**
- **Share this information** with everyone you know and ask them to write and call their legislators.

Lobbying for Success

- **Always be polite and respectful** when addressing lawmakers. The legislative process is grueling and HB 788 will never pass without strong legislative approval and extraordinary voter support.
- **Legislators prefer** personal visits, letters/notes/postcards, telephone calls and e-mail – *in that order*.
- **Be prepared and informed** when appealing to your legislators. The “Hope for Georgia’s Companion Animals” and “Talking Points” handouts included in this packet are helpful tools for you and your lawmakers.
- **Stay in touch** with your legislators, follow HB 788’s progress and never give up!

IF YOU DON'T SPEAK OUT FOR THE ANIMALS, THEIR SUFFERING WILL NEVER END!

GEORGIA VOTERS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
House of Representatives – 2010 General Assembly

Name/Title	Party	Representing	Address	Telephone/fax #s
Amos Amerson , Chairman Retired military and university professor	R HD 9	Parts of Dawson, Forsyth and Lumpkin Counties	401 State Capitol Atlanta, GA 30334 <i>and</i> 689 N. Chestatee St. Dahlonega, GA 30533	404.657.8534 O
Chuck Martin , Vice-Chair Information Technology and Real Estate consultant; Director Ryan & Company	R HD 47	Alpharetta, Roswell, Johns Creek & Greater North Fulton County	245 State Capitol Atlanta, GA 30334 <i>and</i> 11770 Haynes Bridge Rd. Suite 205-544 Alpharetta, GA 30009	404.463.2247 O 404.463.2249 F
Charlice Byrd , Secretary Former educator, political activist and community volunteer	R HD 20	Part of Cherokee County, including Woodstock	411 CLOB Atlanta, GA 30334 <i>and</i> P. O. Box 906 Woodstock, GA 30188	404.557.2218 O 404.463.2793 F 404.557.2218 C
Paul Battles Retired Banker	R HD 15	Part of Bartow County, including Cartersville	404 CLOB Atlanta, GA 30334 <i>and</i> 208 Road #2 South, SW Cartersville, GA 30120	404.656.0109 O 678.315.9840 C 770.382.9965 H
Hardie Davis Pastor/Business Owner	D HD 122	Part of Richmond County	612 CLOB Atlanta, GA 30334 <i>and</i> P. O. Box 235 Gracewood, GA 30812	404.656.0325 O 706.434.8553 866.390.7894 F
Kevin Levitas Vice-President – Legal/Marketing for Hill Manufacturing Co., Inc.	D HD 82	Part of Dekalb County	507 CLOB Atlanta, GA 30334 <i>and</i> 2496 Greenglade Rd., NE Atlanta, GA 30345	404-634-9171 H 404-656-0202 O 404-656-0250 F
Barry Loudermilk Business Owner	R HD 14	Parts of Bartow and Floyd Counties	401 CLOB Atlanta, GA 30334 <i>and</i> P. O. Box 436 Cassville, GA 30123	404.656.0152 O 678.721.5612 H 770.387.1411 F
Mary Margaret Oliver Attorney	D HD 83	Part of Dekalb County	604 CLOB Atlanta, GA 30334 <i>and</i> 150 E. Ponce de Leon Ave. Suite 230; Decatur 30030	404.656.0265 O 404.463.2634 F 404.372.0485 O 404.372.0486 F
Barbara Massey Reece Retired Teacher	D HD 11	Chattooga and part of Floyd Counties	512 CLOB Atlanta, GA 30334 <i>and</i> 693 Massey Road Menlo, GA 30731	404.656.7859 O 404.651.8086 F 706.862.2657 H

Talking Points

HB 788 – A Total Ban on Gas Chambers in Georgia

Statements you may want to use when writing or talking to your legislators, friends, family members and co-workers:

Humane Euthanasia Act of 1990 (HEA) Banned Chambers with 3 Exceptions:

- Counties with less than 25,000 residents
- Larger counties grandfathered in by letter request *but not allowed to replace chambers*
- For *extremely vicious* dogs and/or cats

Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDOA) Habitually Sanctions Violations of State Law and Its Own Rules:

- Only one letter of request on file for grandfathered exemption
- Larger systems allowed to replace chambers after 1990, including Bulloch, Chatham, Cobb, Liberty and Tift Counties
- Charged in 2007 with multiple violations of HEA – *Morton & Robinson vs GDOA & Tommy Irvin*
- Continues to issue and renew licenses to shelters that kill cats and dogs in a manner prohibited by both state statute *and its own rules and regulations*, lacking accountability and transparency in policies and practices
- Unable to provide comprehensive, accurate list of active chambers and a statewide database of shelter statistics
- Ignores state law that euthanasia be performed by a licensed veterinarian or physician, or a properly trained lay person under the supervision of a veterinarian or physician

Approximately 11 Active Gas Chambers Operating Illegally and Not In Compliance with AVMA Recommendations:

- Cobb County gas chamber active *despite 2007 court order to cease and desist and March 2009 Injunction*
- At least 2 counties routinely using gas chambers exceed 25,000 population cap
- Operating gas chambers not of “highest quality construction” (AVMA recommendation)
- Majority of gas chambers do not separate animals and species (AVMA recommendation)
- Records of routine safety inspections of gas chambers and auxiliary equipment non-existent
- No verification equipment is monitored when engaged or animals confirmed dead via stethoscope examination
- E-mail for list of active gas chambers in Georgia: chamblee.abernethy@hotmail.com or gavoters@dariantel.net.

In Conclusion:

- Ample documentation proves gas chambers dangerous to shelter workers and inhumane to both workers and animals *even if used properly*
- 2009 cost analysis comparing euthanasia by gas chambers *used in compliance* to euthanasia by injection (EBI) shows EBI less expensive, poses no health risks to shelter workers, minimizes stress for both shelter workers and animals
- End dialogues that treat *symptoms* of companion animal overpopulation and shift focus to *causes* – Ban Gas Chambers Via HB 788

GEORGIA VOTERS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

Is There Hope for Georgia's Companion Animals?

ASK SERVING AND ASPIRING LEGISLATORS FOR THEIR POSITION ON THESE ISSUES

The Problem

- Georgia's companion animal **overpopulation crisis is now an epidemic.**
- Using a **per-person** formula, our shelters **kill twice the national average.** (Source: GVAW Survey of Animal Services Report*)
- Using a **per-state** formula, we **kill 3.25 times the national average.**
- Georgia's antiquated **catch/house/kill shelter model doesn't work** – It treats the **symptoms** of the problem and not the **causes!**

What Stakeholders Want

- **Taxpayers want fewer tax dollars spent** on animal control.
- **Residents want safe neighborhoods** free of “nuisance” cats and dogs.
- **Animal advocates want lower shelter admission and kill rates and a voice** in creating *humane solutions that work.*

What's Required

- **Affordable, accessible spay/neuter**, targeted to pet owners who need it the most;
- An emphasis on **Humane Education**; and
- **A functional Georgia Department of Agriculture** (GDOA) that works collaboratively with *everyone* and actually **protects companion animals.**

Legislative Goals

- **Enforcement of laws already on the books** (including O.C.G.A. 4-14-3 – 1984 Spay/Neuter Law; O.C.G.A.4-11-5.1- 1990 Humane Euthanasia Act; O.C.G.A. 16-12-4 – 2000 Felony Cruelty Bill; O.C.G.A. 31-19 – Rabies Law; 4-11-1 thru 4-11-18 – Georgia Animal Protection Act);
- Creation and maintenance of a comprehensive, accurate **database of shelter statistics** that is freely accessible to anyone;
- **Increased and targeted spay/neuter funds** via major improvements to Georgia's Dog and Cat Sterilization Program; and
- **Accountability and transparency in GDOA** practices and policies.

*To request a full Report of Findings, e-mail: chamblee.abernethy@hotmail.com or gavoters@dariantel.net

GEORGIA VOTERS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

GEORGIA VOTERS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

WHO WE ARE...

Georgia Voters for Animal Welfare (GVAW) is a grassroots network of Georgia advocates for animals founded in 2008 to support laws and lawmakers working for a safer, healthier and more humane Georgia. Its organizational structure is informal – no governing board, bylaws, website or funding source. The only requirement for membership is a commitment to use one's voice and one's vote to effect positive change for the voiceless in GA.

GVAW is YOU!

WE NEED A LOGO!

**This is an invitation to enter a GVAW
Logo Design Contest!**

One idea that has surfaced is a cute sketch of a typical, Georgia "Black Dog Special" and a Tuxedo kitty, standing and holding a sign between them that reads "Speak For Us!"

Go for it! Submit ideas/sketches to:

gavoters@dariantel.net

by December 1, 2009

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.
This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.