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To the Minnesota State Legislature:

Founded in 1883, American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS) is the first non-profit animal advocacy and educational organization in the United States working to protect animals used in research, testing, and education. On behalf of the AAVS and our membership residing in Minnesota, I urge your strong support of the proposed amendments to Minnesota Statutes, Section 35.71, to ban pound seizure in Minnesota.

Minnesota is one of only three states in the country that still requires animals from pounds to be sold to research facilities that request them. Pound seizure erodes the very core of a shelter's purpose. A shelter that releases animals to research facilities, loses the public's trust. As a result, the number of animals brought to the shelter could decrease. Public surveys indicate that if a person knows pound seizure occurs, they are less likely to utilize the shelter or report a stray animal. This would result in increased suffering of animals who should be rescued or removed from their current situation and exacerbate an overwhelming pet overpopulation crisis.

Communities have increasingly been abandoning the practice of pound seizure and instead are looking at other ways to reduce the number of homeless animals, including spay/neuter programs and proactive adoption policies. Sixteen states and the District of Columbia have laws banning pound seizure. In addition, many counties in states where pound seizure is allowed have taken steps to outlaw the practice. For example, two of the four remaining Michigan counties that still permitted pound seizure banned the practice earlier this year and the state is currently considering legislation that will do the same.

The primary role of a shelter is to provide safe haven for companion animals who have been given up or are lost. Furthermore, an animal shelter that is funded by public tax money, should allow the public to have a say in whether or not the shelter releases animals to dealers. AAVS urges Minnesota to ban the practice of pound seizure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sue A. Leary'.

Sue Leary
President