



P H Y S I C I A N S
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Date: December 23, 2008
To: Minnesota State Legislature
From: Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM)
Topic: Proposed Amendment to Minnesota Statutes, Section 35.71

Dear Senators and Representatives:

This letter constitutes PCRM's endorsement of the proposed amendment to Minnesota Statutes, Section 35.71, which would prohibit pound seizure in Minnesota. In doing this we represent our membership of nearly 7,000 physicians and more than 100,000 other medical professionals, veterinarians, scientists, educators, and laypersons – including 1,100 members in Minnesota. PCRM has reviewed the proposed amendment to the statute, provided by End Pound Seizure Minnesota, but has had no role in drafting it.

Pound seizure is an archaic and discredited practice that has steadily declined in the U.S. for many years. Minnesota is now one of just three states with pound seizure laws, and the number of states with pound seizure *prohibitions* is now 17 (plus the District of Columbia), with similar legislation pending in other states.

Pound seizure strikes at the very core of the social contract between the citizens of Minnesota and their animal shelters. The current law requires shelters to release for research and other lethal purposes lost and surrendered animals entrusted to their care. In contrast, the public expectation is that shelters work only for the benefit of the animals, many of them family pets, unfortunate enough to find themselves in shelters.

Where pound seizure persists, animals may become revenue sources for shelters. Increased rates of animal theft, missing pets, and illegal brokering of animals by shelters have been documented. Studies in New Mexico and Washington, D.C., have confirmed that such pound release practices measurably erode public confidence in animal control facilities, resulting in increased animal abandonment and stray animal populations.

PCRM adds its voice to the citizens of Minnesota seeking to enact legislation prohibiting pound seizure. We urge adoption of the proposed amendment to the current statute.

Sincerely,

John J. Pippin, M.D., F.A.C.C
Senior Medical and Research Adviser