



March 2024

RE: In support of Office of Animal Protection bill (OAP – S.F. 3542 Marty)

Chair Senator Latz and members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

CornerHouse is a child advocacy center based in Minneapolis that interviews children who are exposed to violence and trauma and who are part of a child maltreatment investigation. In addition to being an advocacy center for children, we are also a national trainer on child abuse and how to conduct forensic interviews for investigations.

Through our work of interviewing children, we often hear of polyvictimization, which is when a child is exposed to or experiences more than one type of trauma or victimization. Abuse and trauma do not happen in isolation; there tends to be co-occurrences of events.

For children, a common type of polyvictimization is the “triad” where a child witnesses domestic violence, is exposed to child abuse, and witnesses animal abuse. A person can use an animal in a way to psychologically damage a child. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE Study) research informed us that those who experience an adverse childhood event (such as child abuse or neglect) can suffer lifelong social, economic and health issues. More than one event increases the likelihood of experiencing these impacts.

In the 35 years that CornerHouse has worked in this field, we have seen the enormous need for coordinated responses to child maltreatment and the triad, including training and resources.

We support S.F. 3542 and the creation of an Office of Animal Protection under the Department of Public Safety. This office will provide authorities with the assistance, training, and resources needed to enforce animal cruelty laws and also increase awareness of the link to child abuse and the impact of trauma on children. We are excited to work with the office, once established, to help achieve these objectives and provide greater protections for animals and children.

We ask for your support of S.F. 3542, the Office of Animal Protection bill.

Sincerely,

Christy Shannon

Chief Executive Director, CornerHouse

Jane Straub

Training Director, CornerHouse