



March 2025

TO: Minnesota Senate and House of Representatives

RE: In support of Office of Animal Protection bill (OAP – S.F. 1163 / H.F. 1816)

Dear Legislators,

CornerHouse is a child advocacy center based in Minneapolis that interviews and provides services for 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.

In our work, we often encounter polyvictimization, which is when a child is exposed to or experiences more than one type of trauma or victimization. This abuse and trauma do not happen in isolation; there tends to be co-occurrences of events impacting the child.

Children we work with may be exposed to a type of polyvictimization “triad” where a child experiences abuse, witnesses domestic violence, and witnesses animal abuse. A perpetrator can use an animal in a way to psychologically damage a child or manipulate a partner. Adverse Childhood Experiences (the ACE study) tells us that traumatic experiences in childhood can have short- and long-term consequences related to mental and physical health.

In the 36 years that CornerHouse has worked in this field, we have seen the enormous need for coordinated responses to all types of abuse including child maltreatment, domestic violence, and animal abuse; our community needs training and resources in identifying and responding to co-occurring traumas that harm children and families.

We support S.F. 1163 / H.F. 1816 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. 1163 / H.F. 1816, the Office of Animal Protection bill.

Sincerely,

Christy Shannon
CEO, CornerHouse

Jane Straub
Training Director, CornerHouse