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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the use of the term guardian because, as a veterinarian, I strongly believe that we can best serve our clients, patients and profession by taking a leadership role that advances a deeper understanding of the value of animals in people's lives, and our responsibilities to them. The guardian campaign is a brilliant concept by which to achieve this goal because the art of language, and vocabulary specifically, has powerful implications for shaping perceptions and crafting public policy.

Numerous research studies in the fields of mental and physical health show that our bond with companion animals enhances our longevity and quality of life far in excess of any material possession. Moreover, cultural and forensic studies demonstrate that violence toward animals is a common harbinger of crimes against people. In raising the bar for better care and treatment of companion animals by promoting respect for all life, the guardian campaign also strengthens the fabric of society.

A more compassionate and respectful animal model enriches us all and elevates our veterinary profession insofar as we become the leaders in protecting our precious companions. I am convinced that as more and more people think and act as the guardians of their animal companions, fewer dogs and cats will be killed in our nation's shelters, and more and more animal companions will receive the veterinary care they need and so richly deserve.

I therefore strongly urge my colleagues and community leaders to support the guardian campaign, which reflects a more compassionate and respectful attitude toward animals as companions, and people as their guardians. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Paula Kislak, DVM