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The Honorable Paul D. Connick, Jr. and the Jefferson Parish District Attorney's Office:

Please accept my comments regarding Patsy Chism, 61, of 2501 Colorado Drive. The details of her case, as reported in the Times Picayune (9/2/06) and other news sources, reveal an individual at high risk for ongoing abuse and neglect of animals.

I commend Jefferson Parish law enforcers for investigating complaints about Chism's Marrero kennel and seizing 80 dogs. I understand Chism, previously charged with misdemeanor animal cruelty in a dog's 2005 death shortly after the animal was sold, now faces four counts of aggravated animal cruelty and 76 counts of simple abuse to animals.

I respectfully ask the D.A.'s office to recognize Chism's history of animal abuse/neglect and to prosecute her to the fullest extent allowed by law. I support parish officials in their pursuit of felony charges and urge you to ensure Chism is prohibited from breeding and/or selling animals in the future. In fact, Chism ought to be barred from owning, harboring or working with animals in any context.

Among the confiscated dogs, three were euthanized and one died upon arrival at the East Jefferson animal shelter. Parish officials found ailing dogs, some confined in broken down cages, packed inside a dilapidated building overrun with feces, dirt, and scattered newspapers. The dogs, mostly Chihuahuas, subsisted with little access to food, water, fresh air or exercise.

Chism's defunct website claimed to breed Chihuahuas in a small home kennel where "the health of our dogs comes first." However, as recently as June a resident purchased a dog who succumbed to a degenerative disease (known to Chism when sold) within a week. Chism appears to illegally run a profit-driven enterprise from her home, with failure to provide adequate veterinary care, diet, or shelter.

As you know, mental health professionals and criminologists link animal cruelty with antisocial behavior. The American Psychiatric Association lists animal abuse in its profile for conduct disorders.

In addition to past and present animal cruelty allegations, Chism was also charged with obstruction of justice after her son Charles Striplin fatally shot her boyfriend, Darnell Williams. Chism is accused of removing a butcher knife from William's hands to disprove her son's self-defense plea.

Studies of domestic turbulence frequently show animal *and human* abuse under one roof. It is imperative that authorities enforce animal welfare laws with the meaningful prosecution of all violators. Please do not let repeat offenders like Patsy Chism capitalize on the misery of more animals.

Thank you for your valuable time and consideration,