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Subject: Stop Item #3 – It Will Hide Shelter Deaths and Cost More

Dear Mayor and Council,

I urge you to **vote NO on Item #3 at the September 25th Council meeting.**

The proposed ordinance, as drafted, would let the City hide certain euthanasias from the Live Release Rate (LRR) — the number the public and donors use to track how many animals leave the shelter alive. If “court-ordered” deaths are taken out of the calculation, those animals simply **disappear from the data.**

That means:

- More dogs will be sent to court for euthanasia— not because it’s required, but because it makes the numbers look better.
- Each court case is expensive. Officers and City Attorneys have to prepare, file, and appear in court. That’s staff time and taxpayer money wasted on a paperwork loophole.
- Public trust will take a hit. The shelter already struggles with transparency. If deaths are hidden, trust from rescues, partners, and the community will collapse.

The City’s own records show court-ordered euthanasias are already increasing: 87 cases in the past four years compared to just 24 in the five years before. If this loophole is approved, those numbers will only grow— and the public will never see them in the City’s reported data.

If Council wants to save money and stay true to the City’s strategic plan, it should:

1. Postpone Item #3 until the real costs of these court cases are disclosed.
2. Or adopt a simple fix: keep “court-ordered” deaths in the Live Release Rate so the public has an honest picture of outcomes.

Austin is proud to be a “No Kill” city. This change would take us backwards by hiding deaths instead of preventing them.

Respectfully,
[Your Name]