

TO THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
MARCH 5, 2007

**IN SUPPORT OF SB 284: AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF PETS  
IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES**

Last spring Maine passed a law extending the coverage of protective orders in domestic violence cases to include animal companions of the human victims. The most surprising thing about that legislation is that Maine was the first state in the nation to pass such a bill.

I urge the Connecticut do the same.

Some have questioned this bill, fearing a focus on animals will take attention away from the human victims of violence in the home.

Those critics should be assured: SB 284 is not animal rights legislation. This is a human rights bill.

Domestic violence is about control and anger; animals are often used as pawns in a domestic-violence situation, with abusers harming pets to punish, intimidate or control their victims. A 1998 study indicated that 74% of battered women seeking shelter in safehouses were animal owners, and 71% of them reported that their partners had threatened or harmed their companion animals. Some studies have reported that between 25 percent and 40 percent of domestic violence victims do not leave their abusers out of fear of what might happen to their animals.

Under SB 284, the temporary restraining orders and protective orders would protect animals in the same way a victim is protected: this will deter the abuser from hurting someone's beloved pets as another means of controlling a victim.

Again, this is not an animal-rights bill in disguise. This is, both on and below the surface, an attempt to secure for a victim of domestic violence the simple human right to know that society will help protect those he or she holds dear, even when they have four legs and whiskers.

We ask that you give SB 284 your fullest support.

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