

**Testimony of Chiron Otero
in support of HB 6565,
An Act Concerning Humane Education**

March 9, 2009

Dear Members of the Education Committee:

I am writing this letter to request that you support HB 6565, An Act Concerning Humane Education. As a biology student at the University of Connecticut, and member of the Ornithology Research Group, I have very strong feelings about the use of animals in science and especially for use in dissections. I myself have confronted the issue about whether to dissect animals or not several times over the course of my academic career, including several times during junior high and high school. It was during these times that I felt a moral obligation not to participate in the activity and I refused to do so. Thankfully, this was in New York where I grew up and where I had the right to refuse to participate based on my beliefs.

I know very well that if I was not allowed to opt out of the dissection that I would have accepted the failing grade I would receive because it meant that much to me not to abandon my convictions. However, I am sure there are many other students out there who would not be able to say the same as they fear a failing grade or being ostracized. I also know that had I been forced to dissect a frog, fetal pig, or earthworm that I would have been turned off by biology completely which would have been a shame.

While I still do not condone dissections, I have been fortunate enough to explore beyond that aspect of biology and enjoy the many other avenues of research that allow me to contribute to the field of science. For that very reason I believe that alternatives to dissections are not only acceptable, but they are superior to the animal dissections. I was able to learn easily and efficiently using software programs that taught me additional computer skills en route to earning A's in those classes and moving on to other biology classes. That being said I feel that at the least every student should be afforded the opportunity to choose between dissections and alternatives as it can have an adverse affect on their education experience.

Please give Connecticut children a voice in their schools and support HB 6565, Thank You.

Sincerely,
Chiron Otero

72 Marsh Road Apt 1
Willington, CT 06279-2214