

UConn Vegan Huskies

University of Connecticut, 2110 Hillside Road, Storrs, CT 06269

**Testimony of UConn Vegan Huskies at the University of Connecticut
in support of HB 6565,
An Act Concerning Humane Education**

March 9, 2009

Dear Members of the Education Committee:

This testimony is respectfully submitted on behalf of UConn Vegan Huskies, a student organization at the University of Connecticut dedicated to informing the college community and public community at large about veganism and offering our support in endeavors regarding animal rights, human rights, and the environment. **The UConn Vegan Huskies urge you to support HB 6565, An Act Concerning Humane Education.** We support this bill because it would offer students an opportunity to weigh their options and pursue alternatives in lieu of their personal decision not to participate in the primitive practice of dissection.

The quality of education that is sought by educators can just as easily be achieved by allowing individual students to utilize software programs that offer all of the same anatomical details and lessons of a dissection. It is also a shame that college students such as us have the option of refusing to participate in laboratory sessions involving dissections because of our personal and religious beliefs, while middle and high school students who share these beliefs are academically penalized.

It is also our opinion that dissections below college-level courses are completely unnecessary as many younger students come away with less of an appreciation for living creatures after having been exposed to the practice of cutting and removing body parts for the sole purpose of an additional visual aid to textbooks. We whole-heartedly support the use of programs such as the DryLab series by Neotek and DissectionWorks by Science Works Incorporated that include dissections of frogs, fetal pigs, cats, earthworms, rats, and other commonly dissected animals. These programs are also supported by the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine and can be easily accessed through their website (Source: http://www.pcrm.org/resch/anexp/dissection_alternatives.html).

In addition, we feel that these alternatives would be best suited for schools to use as their sole source of visual aids instead of dissection. They serve the same purpose with more benefits such as the ability to repeat exercises that could not be done with a dead animal that has already been cut. This ability to fix mistakes ensures the students understanding and allows for the practice of reusing such software. Should a school decide to use software over animal dissections over time it would surely be a cost-saving measure as the purchase of such software is a one-time deal that would last for years.

Lastly, we simply want students to be able to decide for themselves regarding this controversial issue. Many other states have passed legislature allowing for students to refuse participation in dissections and Connecticut has the opportunity to provide their students with the same privilege. Not only would this be beneficial to the individual student, but to the field of biology itself as many more students would surely feel less intimidated about scientific approaches and possibly pursue science as a career if they are not forced into activities they may object to.

Sincerely,

Julia Otero, President, UConn Vegan Huskies