

TESTIMONY OF JUSTIN GOODMAN IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL NO. 6565,
AN ACT CONCERNING HUMANE EDUCATION

FOR THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MARCH 9, 2009

Dear Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Justin Goodman and I am a recent graduate of the University of Connecticut where I received my Master's degree in Sociology and studied, among other things, human-animal relationships. I am here today to express my strong support for HB 6565, An Act Concerning Humane Education.

HB 6565 includes provisions that would allow the State Board of Education to assist in developing and distributing a new curriculum of humane education which would address the humane and respectful treatment of animals, people and the environment and would provide training in these subjects to educators and administrators as well. Given our vast knowledge about the rich lives and incredible abilities of animals and the various roles they play in nature and society, students should have a sense of how we can treat these fellow living, feeling beings with compassion and respect.

Further, HB 6565 includes a section that would prohibit schools from requiring students to perform experiments or dissections on animals. This provision would place Connecticut in line with 15 other states across the country that have passed laws or resolutions requiring educators to offer non-animal alternative assignments to students who have objections to harming animals or dissecting them (http://www.hsus.org/animals_in_research/animals_in_education/dissection_laws.html). In fact, across the board, research shows that the educational outcomes of students who use non-animal learning methods, like computer simulations or clay modeling, have been equivalent or superior to those of students who use traditional animal-based methods, such as dissection.^{1,2} In light of this, the National Science Teachers Association has amended its position statements to recognize the educational acceptability of non-animal learning methods as replacements for animal dissection and to support the right of students to be offered alternative assignments.³

HB 6565 would enhance the educational experiences of students in our State by addressing subjects that have not been effectively addressed in conventional educational materials, creating more inclusive learning environments and encouraging young people to appreciate diversity and treat others, both humans and animals, with compassion and respect.

Sincerely,

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¹Dewhurst, D.G. & Jenkinson, L. 1995. The impact of computer-based alternatives on the use of animals in undergraduate teaching. *Alternatives to Laboratory Animals* 23, 521-530.

²Humane Society of the United States. Comparative studies of dissection and other animal uses. Retrieved from http://www.hsus.org/animals_in_research/animals_in_education/comparative_studies_of_dissection_and_other_animal_uses.html

³Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. (2008). Dissection alternatives victory. *Good Medicine*, 17(4). Retrieved from http://www.pcrm.org/Magazine/gm08autumn/dissection_victory.html