

Education Committee Testimony of
Neil Hornish

March 9, 2009

In Support of HB6565
An Act Concerning Humane Education

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee.

My name is Neil Hornish and I am here in support of HB6565, An Act Concerning Humane Education. I am cofounder of The Compassionate Living Project, a humane education organization in Granby, and I have spent the last six years providing humane education lessons to classrooms from elementary through college level. In 2005 I received my Masters in Education with a focus in Humane Education.

The basic premise of humane education in my opinion is to ensure that people live and make choices that are consistent with their beliefs. To live with compassion and integrity. Unfortunately in our society, we often have no idea to what extent our actions affect the world around us. Where do the products we buy come from? How are the natural resources used? How were the people who made them treated? Humane education helps develop critical thinking skills and develops a sense of respect and responsibility, not only towards animals, but also towards the environment and other people. It does not tell students what they should or should not do, but helps them analyze information and find feasible alternatives when they discover objectionable consequences to their consumer choices.

I can attest to the energy and enthusiasm with which students respond when they realize how much of an impact their choices make and are empowered to decide their own solutions.

HB6565 is an ideal bill for these economically challenging times. Not only does it avoid an unfunded mandate by looking to existing humane education organizations to support the schools, but by allowing teachers to take humane education classes as part of their continuing education requirements, it enables the them to determine how they wish to incorporate humane education into their curriculum. These teachers will learn methods to peak their student's curiosity about humane education issues while achieving their current goals. Humane education can be implemented in any classroom: math, art, science, social studies.

Humane education is a key component in addressing the social justice issues that affect our society, from bullying, to environmental degradation, to human rights violations and animal abuse. HB6565 is a resourceful solution to provide humane education without creating an additional burden on state and municipal budgets.

Thank you for your time.

