

Testimony in support of HB6565
An Act Concerning Humane Education
For the Education Committee

March 9, 2009

Dear Committee,

I am writing to you to request that the Committee support HB 6565.

My daughter, Alexandra Karin Hoyt, was attending Tolland Middle School a few years ago and came home to tell me that they were going to dissect frogs in her class. Being strong advocates of animal protection, she was very apprehensive about having to dissect a frog. I remembered how nauseous I was many years ago when I, too, had to dissect frogs, earth worms and watch a sheep eyeball being dissected. I called the science teacher and principal and asked if she could be excused. They said that she would have to be part of the procedure by watching, but she did not have to actually cut open the animal. I went on to contact NEAVS in Boston to attain information about how many animals are killed each year for dissection experiments and if this actually benefits a student or not. I was shocked to learn that the number of creatures which are sacrificed for these experiments is quite high. I also spoke to several of my daughter's classmates who said they were emotionally disturbed by having to participate in this procedure. I went ahead with more research and learned that there are wonderful computer programs that show a dissection step by step so the students can learn about the parts of the animal. I also found out that a large rubber model can be purchased which the students can "dissect" and it shows the body parts with amazing, lifelike reality. I also found out that the formaldehyde which they use can be toxic to students working on the dissections. I gathered enough material to make a presentation to the principal asking if students can have the choice of not doing a dissection on a real animal should they choose. I also asked if I could buy this rubber model and the computer program with my own money to make a donation to the school for further science classes. Although they did not get back to me on my request, I did hear that students were being allowed to make a choice whether to participate by cutting open the animal or not.

I believe strongly in the value of science and biology. I would not want to inhibit the learning of any children. However, in a society where violence is rampant and respect for other people as well as animals is often poor, killing thousands and thousands of animals so that students can dissect them is not sending a sound moral message. These students can learn the same material and often in a better way without using a real creature. I do not think grades K-12 need to participate in animal dissections. The computer programs and rubber models which are available can be used year after year, saving the schools money and stopping children from emotional trauma as well as saving the animals which are killed for this archaic procedure. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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