

Dear Education Committee,

I am writing to you to ask that you support An Act Concerning Dissection Choice (HB 5423) and so that children will not be forced to dissect animals in their classes.

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 also spoke to several of my daughter's classmates who said they were emotionally disturbed by having to participate in this procedure. 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. Unsatisfied, I went on to contact the New England Antivivisection Society in Boston to obtain information about how many animals are killed each year for dissection (more than 10 million) and what alternatives were available. I learned that there are wonderful interactive 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 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 rubber models and computer programs with my own money to make a donation to the school for further science classes. The school never got back to me about my request, but I did hear that students were being allowed to choose whether or not to participate in dissection. Insuring that educators protect students and respect their beliefs about animals should not be so difficult.

I believe strongly in the value of science. However, in a society where violence is rampant and respect for other people as well as animals is often poor, killing millions of animals so that students can cut them up is not sending a moral message. These students can learn the same material and often in a better way without using a real creature.

The computer programs and other methods which are available can be used year after year, saving the schools money and stopping children from being exposed to emotional trauma as well as saving the animals who are killed for this archaic procedure. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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