

February 23, 2011

**Testimony Concerning Proposed Bill 6320**  
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**Vice President, CT Votes for Animals**  
**Member, Animal Welfare Federation of CT**

Members of the Environment Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on **House Bill 5368, AN ACT EXTENDING PET SHOP LICENSE REQUIREMENTS TO PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT IMPORT ANIMALS FOR ADOPTION**

Our Organizations supports the concept of appropriate regulation of the importation of dogs and cats in Connecticut, but we cannot support the proposal contained within House Bill 5368.

Our primary objection to this proposal is that it presumes that people who bring cats or dogs into Connecticut are "businesses" who make profits from this activity. This presumption is evidenced by the fact that the bill inserts all people who bring cats or dogs into Connecticut into the pet store business licensing statutes and the statutes involving other businesses, including commercial kennels, grooming facilities and training facilities.

The vast majority of the people who import animals are compassionate people who bring cats and dogs into CT as a form of rescue. They are not businesses and do not make or attempt to make any profits. As a matter of fact, I suspect that most folks (like myself) lose money on rescuing, rehabilitating and adopting animals. Accordingly we rely on the work of volunteers and charitable contributions to make our work possible. Most of us are truly not-for-profit charitable organizations whose missions are to help animals find good homes with nice families – not to make profits.

Of course, we certainly understand that there are a few people/operations in Connecticut who do appear to run large-scale importation "businesses;" and are for all intents and purposes they are acting as pet stores--and they probably should be regulated as pet stores (we have all heard the stories of large-scale pet sales events occurring in parking lots and shopping malls and animals being "adopted" off the back of big trucks as they just arrive into CT).

The rescue community is deeply concerned about that type of activity and we believe fair, humane and thoughtful regulation will help identify and regulate those organizations who are not putting the welfare of the animals as the first priority.

It's my understanding from the proponents of this bill that the actual intent of the bill is to regulate these large-scale importation businesses. We agree. But the problem with this bill is that it would regulate these big businesses in the same exact way as it would regulate my small nonprofit rescue organization, and many other small rescue organizations.

That all being said, we do in fact believe that the whenever a cat or dog is brought into Connecticut, the following rules should be followed by everyone – the large scale importers and the small rescue organization or the individual person:

1. Before bringing a cat or dog into Connecticut, the person must obtain a certificate of health from a licensed veterinarian in the place of origin stating that the cat or dog is healthy enough to be transported into Connecticut, and if old enough, the cat or dog is vaccinated against rabies (this is

essentially already the law under section 22-354).

2. Once the cat or dog arrives in Connecticut – and before the cat or dog can be sold or adopted, the person must have the cat or dog examined by a Connecticut-licensed Veterinarian and the dog or cat cannot be sold or transferred to anyone until the Connecticut vet certifies that the cat or dog is healthy. **This is a very strong and appropriate requirement to ensure health and safety.**
3. All cats or dogs brought into Connecticut from another place must be spayed or neutered (unless a licensed Vet certifies that the animal cannot undergo such surgery).
4. Within 30 days of the cat or dog being examined in Connecticut by a Connecticut-licensed Vet, then the person who brought the dog or cat into Connecticut must file the 3 Vets certificates with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (the certificate from the Vet in the place of origin, the certificate from the CT Vet, and the certificate showing spay/neuter).
5. The person must maintain copies of these certificates for 2 years as proof of compliance and the person can be penalized by the Department of Agriculture for failure to maintain the records.
6. Any person who intends to offer for sale or adoption any dogs or cats who have already been imported into this state at a public venue such as a parking lot or a shopping center, shall notify the local chief law enforcement officer of the municipality in which such public venue is located at least three days prior to the sale or adoption event. Failure to notify the chief law enforcement officer can result in a fine.

We would certainly be open to discussions with members of the Committee and with all interested parties.

On behalf of the animal welfare and protection community, I urge you to support an appropriate amendment to this legislation.

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony.

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