



A Private Charity Since 1881

Dear Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and Members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Gordon G. Willard and I am submitting testimony in opposition to HB 5399, an act concerning the euthanizing of animals by the Connecticut Humane Society.

In 1997 the General Assembly banned the use of the decompressing chamber as a means for euthanasia and established the injection of sodium pentobarbital as the appropriate alternative. In 1981, an exemption to the Veterinary Practice Act was granted to the Connecticut Humane Society recognizing its unique purpose and allowing it to conduct euthanasia using sodium pentobarbital.

The role of the Connecticut Humane Society in the eyes of the public continues to be a last refuge for citizens with animal issues and for those animals who have no other human advocates. The expectations and demands to care for homeless animals and those animals who no longer have someone to care for them has not changed over the years or since 1981 when the State recognized and enacted the legislation now in question.

Animals that have no owners, that have been turned away by other organizations and for profit animal care services or where owners do not have the resources to utilize any traditional animal care assistance continue to come to CHS's doors.

Time and time again, the need to relieve suffering and deal with animals in dire need continue to be presented to all of the three major CHS shelters and those shelters must retain the current exemption to the veterinary practice act established by the State in 1981.

CHS does not take this special authority lightly. In order to maintain the highest standards of performance and in order to maintain the most caring and humane practice for those animals in need, extensive training is required before only selected staff may perform euthanasia. The responsibility associated with the chief veterinarian whose license to practice veterinary medicine and secure a permit to purchase controlled substances demands the highest standards of performance. The regulatory oversight for CHS is the same as those for every licensed veterinarian who practices in Connecticut.

CHS utilizes the Humane Society of the United States Euthanasia Training manual which has long been the gold standard for training throughout the United States. It is an extensive training program which for CHS requires three to six months of training and hands on experience followed by direct observations made by the chief veterinarian before any person becomes authorized.

The practices utilized by the Connecticut Humane Society maintain the highest standards. We respectfully ask the Committee to reject HB 5399.

Sincerely,

Gordon G. Willard
Executive Director
Connecticut Humane Society