

Thank you in advance for your time. As a science teacher in the New Haven Public School system, I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 5530, legislation that would allow students in Connecticut to opt out of classroom animal dissection and instead be provided with non-animal learning methods like computer simulations, plastic models and DVDs.

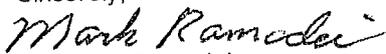
I have been a science teacher in Connecticut for 40 years and have never used animal dissection in my classroom. I have found that there are more effective and humane ways to teach anatomy to students, and my own decision is overwhelmingly supported by decades of research that shows students who use alternatives to dissection learn as well as or better than their peers who dissect animals (for examples, see: http://www.dissectionalternatives.org/concerned/dissection_comparative_studies.pdf). Alternatives to dissection also cost significantly less and save teachers like myself time and, increasingly more importantly, money. Alternatives only need to be purchased once and can be used year after year: <http://www.digitalfrog.com/products/frog-price-comparison.html>.

Students are increasingly concerned with animal welfare issues associated with animal dissection and formal student choice policies insure that these views are respected. And given the myriad effective alternatives to dissection available, there is no reason they should not be. Fifteen states—including Connecticut's neighbors Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York—have laws or policies allowing students to opt-out of dissection.

As you are surely aware, the National Science Teachers Association's position statement on the "Responsible Use of Live Animals and Dissection in the Science Classroom," states that "NSTA encourages teachers to be sensitive to students' views regarding dissection, and to be aware of students' beliefs and their right to make an informed decision about their participation" and that "science teachers [should] be prepared to present an alternative to dissection to students whose views or beliefs make this activity uncomfortable and difficult for them." This statement can be found here: <http://www.nsta.org/about/positions/animals.aspx>. The NSTA statement even goes on to state that it supports teachers' decisions to completely replace animal dissection with non-animal methods.

I urge you to support HB 5530, which will insure that students religious and ethical beliefs about animals are respected, encourage the integration of modern and superior learning tools in the classroom and save teachers and school districts valuable resources.

Sincerely,



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