

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Kathleen Sullivan**  
**Board Member CT. Votes for Animals, Our Companions**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Bloomfield, and I am a member of the Board of Trustees of CT. Votes for Animals and Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary.

I was astounded to learn that ACOs are expected to do their job with no formal training. In many cases the work puts both animals and humans in dangerous situations. An ACO should have a basic skill set that would allow them to do the job safely and humanely for all parties involved. This bill will help with that tremendously. Also, I expect that the training process will help to screen out the type of callous individuals we have read about in the papers in recent months that accept ACO positions because they require no skills, and are largely unsupervised, not because they care in the slightest about the animals the job charges them with protecting.

Until our recent move to Bloomfield, I lived on Bloomfield Avenue in Hartford for 16 years. I had a number of encounters with Animal Control Officers while living there because dogs were abandoned in our neighborhood from time to time. We also had an active wildlife population since we lived in proximity to the wetlands surrounding the Park River and the acreage belonging to the Hartford Golf Club. One incident in particular comes to mind.

One morning in 2008 at 11a.m. a coyote was hit crossing the street in front of my house. The car that hit it never stopped. I could see that the animal was severely, probably fatally hurt, but was still alive and suffering mightily. I called the City of Hartford Animal Control and to my great relief an ACO responded within a short period of time. Luckily, she clearly had experience with such incidents and handled the situation in a professional manner. She dressed in protective garments and gloves and handled the coyote carefully and humanely. She wrapped the animal in a heavy blanket or tarp to protect both of them, and carried him to the van where she gently placed him; all the while keeping myself and the other person at the scene well away. She assured us that she would take the animal directly to the vet to be euthanized and end the pain. She observed that he had a terrible injury and was also likely sick or rabid as he was roaming at midday.

What if a less experienced individual had been on call that morning and been bitten by a possibly rabid wild animal in the process of removing him from a very busy street because they had no idea how to approach an accident victim? "Safety first" is the mantra in many workplaces, why not this one?

On behalf of residents and animals throughout CT, I urge you to support Raised Bill 5443. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

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