

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5443**  
**Susan L. Wallace PhD**  
**Cherry Brook Kennels LLC**

I am writing to 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 Canton, CT and an owner of a dog boarding kennel. My business, Cherry Brook Kennels LLC, is the designated shelter for the Town of Farmington, CT.

Each year the Town of Farmington delivers approximately 150-200 cats, dogs, and miscellaneous domestic pets to our facility. About half of these pets are returned to their owners within 48 hours. Unfortunately, the other half of the dogs and most of the cats are not claimed and are put up for adoption. The **vast majority of the unclaimed pets have not been spayed or neutered**. With the exception of dogs from the bully breeds, most friendly, altered dogs are adopted quickly. Pets that are not spayed and neutered are harder to place. All adopters are required to purchase the State Voucher, but we do not know how many of the pets sent with vouchers are altered after leaving our facility.

Conservative estimates indicate that the number of descendants produced by an unsprayed female cat allowed to roam outside is between 100 to 400 cats. This assumes that only 25% of the female offspring survive.

Early in my ownership I adopted out a female cat with a voucher. The owner failed to have the cat spayed and a litter of kittens were born. She gave away these kittens and there is no way to know how many additional cats were produced.

In the past few years I have taken to “adopting” cats and dogs myself for the sole purpose of having them spayed and neutered. There are two advantages to this tactic:

1. I can be absolutely sure that the cat or dog has been altered.
2. People seem to prefer dogs that are already “fixed.”

Pets that are already spayed and neutered find homes more quickly.

In my town of Canton, there is a significant feral cat population near Secret Lake. To my knowledge, no attempt has been made to catch, alter, and release these cats to prevent further reproduction. This colony presents a danger to the residents in the neighborhood. A few years ago a child and the ACO in Simsbury, CT were attacked by a rabid feral cat. The Secret Lake cat population is susceptible to rabies and other diseases and is another tragedy waiting to happen. There are probably many more colonies in the state that are similar to the Secret Lake colony.

Every female cat or dog that is spayed prevents a significant number of unwanted cats or dogs

from being born. Giving the ACO the authority to alter the pets prior to adoption is the only way to guarantee that a cat or dog adopted from a Connecticut municipality is spayed or neutered. I have not seen any statistics on how many of the State Vouchers are actually redeemed. With the current voucher system, follow-up with adopters to make sure that the pets are spayed or neutered is essential to the success of the program.

This piece of legislature is important to the citizens, towns, and the state of CT. Controlling the expanding population of unwanted animals is expensive and emotionally draining. This bill could make a significant dent in the number of unwanted pets in our state.

Thank you,

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