

Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446
Elizabeth Marsden

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 Chaplin, and I also volunteer for several animal rescue organizations in CT.

I moved here from the Washington DC area several years ago, and was unfamiliar with the CT laws concerning pounds and animals being released for adoption from pounds. (I had worked in animal shelters in the DC area for 30 years). When I found out that dogs and cats were being released from CT pounds without being spayed or neutered first, I couldn't believe it. In DC and the Mid-Atlantic states, it has been normal procedure for pounds and shelters to do pre-adoption neutering and spaying for at least the past ten years. Every progressive leader in the sheltering world recognizes the need for this, and they have come up with solutions to make it happen.

It should go without saying that shelters and pounds exist because there are thousands of unwanted dogs and cats out there, and that spaying and neutering pound pets is necessary so that they don't contribute to even more unwanted pets. Unfortunately, the current CT law handicaps animal control officers so that they are in the frustrating situation of knowing that the pets they are releasing might end up producing more homeless pets in a revolving door syndrome. The ACOs who are trying to do a good job are prevented from doing so by the current law. This makes no sense to me.

The second item I'd like to address is the training of animal control officers. At this time, anyone who signs up for the job can be appointed, with or without any training or background in animal care and control. And remember, protecting people from rabies is one of the duties of this job! I have been appalled at the lack of professionalism I've seen in this state. I've also seen some exemplary ACOs, but they are the ones who have taken the initiative to attend training courses and keep up to date in their field. I honestly have not seen such a lack of municipal support for ACOs anywhere else in the nation, except in the very economically disadvantaged southern states. Training is vitally needed and should be mandatory for a job that includes protecting people from rabies.

I urge you to pass Bill 5446 and to get CT up to speed with these important issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

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