

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5443**  
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**Volunteer for Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary**

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 Columbia, CT, and I am a volunteer for Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary.

As you already are aware, there have been too many tear worthy articles in the news indicating abuse, sheer neglect, lack of medical care and basic incompetence towards animals involving a number of Connecticut's Animal Control Officers. These incidents clearly imply over and over that there is little regulation of these people in these positions and they lack any formal training necessary to handle these animals in a way that is merely humane. In the state of Connecticut it is illegal to abuse or neglect a pet and this is going on right in our own municipalities! Colchester, Naugatuck and New Britain are just a few towns that have had recent investigations of ACO abuse. We need to get back to basics and educate these people who are paid to do a job ~ correctly and ideally with compassion.

Raised bill 5443 will supply the much needed infrastructure our municipalities need to give hope that these animals will receive more humane treatment Animal Control Officer training is the solution and a solution supported by progressive Animal Control Officers throughout the state who greatly want to professionalize the field. The ability to vaccinate and spay/neuter animals before their release from the shelter is a fundamental start and it's an outrage that our animal are being release unsterilized. These ACO positions should not be maintained by old school dog catchers. We need a new breed of ACO's and Raised Bill 5443 will allow us to start weeding out the dog catchers and weeding in ACO's that want do this job for the right reasons.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

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