

Testimony in Support of Raised Bill 5446  
Valerie Friedman, March 16, 2012  
Board Chair, Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary

I appreciate 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.

In an enlightened state like CT, it is distressing that the rules by which municipal pounds and the animal control officers (ACOs) responsible for the pounds operate is so backward. Animal lovers throughout the State of CT are shocked and distressed to learn that animals are released from municipal pounds without being spayed or neutered and without basic vaccinations. This only exacerbates the problem of too many unwanted and abandoned animals, who fill the pounds and have to be put to untimely deaths. The goal needs to be a requirement that all animals released from CT pounds are "fixed" before being released. But until we make that happen (and it cannot happen soon enough), Raised Bill 5446 serves as a significant stopgap, giving ACOs the authority to redeem the State's spay/neuter voucher and have an animal fixed before adoption and vaccinated for rabies. This will accomplish two critical goals, preventing more unwanted animals from being born and protecting public health.

Equally important is the requirement that ACOs undergo basic mandatory training, so they serve the public and the animals in their care with professionalism. This training would give ACOs the tools they need to prevent injury to themselves, as well as to others. There have been numerous examples of ACOs causing damage to themselves and others due to inappropriate behavior, which results in embarrassing public relations problems.

This bill is supported by many Animal Control Officers, municipal officials, and the public, who want to see improvements that enable CT to become a role model in animal welfare for the rest of the country.

Thank you for giving this important subject the attention it deserves.

Yours truly,

Valerie Friedman  
Washington, CT

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