

Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 5324 - AAC CHILD SAFETY BY RESTRICTING THE PLACEMENT OF LEGHOLD TRAPS (SUPPORT, request Amendment) Submitted by:
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In CT, over 6000 wild animals are legally trapped each year primarily for recreational purposes, yet the placement of traps is often unbeknownst to all people and animals in close proximity to trapping sites. People's dogs, cats, and other non-target animals are among the often unseen victims of these non-selective traps which snap shut on any animal that happens to step on them.

In the past 3 months alone, almost a dozen terrible incidents were reported in the news media of beloved pets caught in these traps, all with tragic if not deadly outcomes. Just about all the trapped pets died or had to be euthanized, which was traumatic for all family members, particularly children.

The first instinct of a constrained animal is to panic and fight to get free, which often leads to severe injuries, exhaustion, and dehydration. "Wring-offs"-- i.e. a term trappers use for animals who twist or chew off their own foot to escape a leghold trap.

Trappers are supposed to check their traps every 24 hours, which means animals suffer over a prolonged period and may be subject to weather extremes and being preyed upon - in some cases literally eaten alive. This 24 hour check requirement is virtually impossible to enforce; many animals suffer in traps for far longer periods.

Nine states (AZ, CA, CO, FL, MA, NJ, RI, WA) have banned or severely restricted the use of the body-crushing and/or leghold traps due to their harmful nature and safety issues.

Nuisance wildlife control operators and farmers will NOT be economically impacted by this bill. Nearly all animal removal work is in and around homes, where leg-hold traps would be dangerous for humans and pets. Box traps (havaheart-style) are the tool of choice and commonly used. This bill will not impact or restrict agricultural uses on private land

Requested amendment to RB 5324 -- INCLUDE BODY-CRUSHING TRAPS "CONIBEAR TRAPS"):

This bill needs to also include body-crushing traps, since over half the animals trapped in CT are caught with this non-selective device. Although meant to kill animals by breaking their spine, body-crushing traps only do so when the target animal enters the trap perfectly - conditions very difficult to control in nature. When not killed outright, these traps cause immense suffering.

Body-crushing traps pose an extreme safety risk to curious pets and children alike, due to the force with which they slam shut and the amount of damage they can do. Not surprisingly, more than half the media reports about fatally trapped pets in the last few months concerned body-crushing traps.