RAISED BILL NO. 5324
TESTIMONY OF DR. NAN ZYLA, PRESIDENT, HARP, Inc.
SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN
MARCH 6, 2012

I am here to testify in support of H.B. No. 5324, An Act Concerning Child Safety by Restricting the Placement of Leghold Traps.

Leghold traps are known as LAND MINES because of the damage they do to whoever innocently wanders into the trap, whether they are children, or adults, pets, birds, endangered species or any other person or wildlife. Leghold traps are completely indiscriminate in who they injure, maim or kill.

I will offer just three examples:

1) An eleven-year-old girl in northern Wisconsin, playing along a creek near her family's vacation cottage, caught her thumb in a steel-jawed leghold trap set for muskrats. She suffered from bruising, swelling and emotional distress.

2) In Allentown, Pennsylvania, a nine-year-old boy, while playing along a riverbank, fell into the river and got his left thumb caught in a muskrat trap.

3) In San Bernardino, California, a sixteen-year-old stepped into a steel-jaw leghold trap while hiking. He suffered from bruising, cuts and swelling.

These traps are barbaric, painful, and declared inhumane by professional organizations such as the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Animal Hospital Association, and the World Veterinary Organization.

Many famous people have spoken out against leghold traps, including Roger Tory Peterson, Bart Giamatti, numerous public officials and veterinarians who have seen first-hand the damage caused by traps. Pets that survive leghold traps have had their legs amputated because they were so badly maimed in the trap. In the words of an ex-trapper, leghold traps are "probably the most cruel device ever invented by man" (Dick Randall, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service).

Former DEP Commissioner Dan W. Lufkin stated in a letter, "As a young boy I trapped and used leghold traps; until one early morning I found a police dog caught in my line. It took me three hours to release her and yet a lifetime to forget the pain and fear in her eyes. From that day forward I never set another trap."

Kids are by nature curious and want to explore. As a start, let's remove this completely preventable hazard, leghold traps, from all kids' environments.

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