

Testimony Concerning HB 5377
Susan B. Linker, March 7, 2012
CEO, Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary
Vice President, CT Votes for Animals.

Dear Chairpersons Hartley & Dargan, and Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, I am writing **in support of H.B No. 5377**, An Act Prohibiting the Use of Animals, Reptiles, or Birds as Prizes at Bazaars or Carnivals or as Raffle Prizes.

Our Companions and CT Votes for Animals feel that raffles, contests and prizes in which animals are given away is unethical and a practice that should be stopped.

When animals are given away as prizes people are wholly unprepared to care for the animal, and as a result, the animals suffer neglect and often perish from improper care.

Personally speaking, when I was a child I recall going to a fair and winning an anole (a reptile some people refer to as a chameleon). This small lizard is native to tropical climates and eats grubs, crickets, cockroaches, spiders, moths, and other small insects. I was a child and had no idea how to properly care for this animal. As I look back now, even though my parents attempted to help me in the care giving, this poor creature was nothing less than neglected by me and had a short, miserable life.

To this day I have great regret for my actions, but I recognize that I was not in a position, as a child, to make informed decisions like this. The fact that this animal was given to me for winning a game gave me the perception that it was not a valuable being that ought to be cared for and considered on any important level.

That is just my experience, but there are so many animals that are given away in such a fashion, including puppies, kittens, birds, chicks and fish.

Acquiring a companion animal should be the result of careful planning and consideration. People should have a clear understanding of the responsibilities involved and carefully consider whether they have the facilities, time, financial means and level of interest today and in the future to ensure proper care for their animal.

The use of live animals as prizes is illegal in many states and it should be in Connecticut as well.

We urge this Committee to support H.B. No. 5377 so other animals are not being neglected, and so we, as a State, can send an important message about the inherent value and respect for all living creatures.

Sincerely,



Susan B. Linker
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