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From: Westhighlander10@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, April 04, 2013 4:57 PM
To: Jud Testimony
Subject: Testimony Concerning Raised Bill No. 6690

Testimony Concerning Raised Bill No. 6690

Connecticut Dog Federation, Inc.

Co-Chairman Coleman, Co-Chairman Fox, and members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Connecticut Dog Federation, Inc. thanks the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to express its **OPPOSITION** to Raised Bill No. 6690, An Act Concerning Court Proceedings and the Protection of Animals. In that regard, we offer the following position statement:

Position Statement Relative To

Raised Bill H.B. No. 6690 An Act Concerning Court Proceedings and the Protection of Animals

The Connecticut Dog Federation, Inc. (CDF) **OPPOSES** Raised Bill H.B. No. 6690 as presently written.

CDF is an association of thirty-seven dog clubs representing approximately two thousand resident voters of this state. They support the mission of CDF which includes: (1) the encouragement and promotion of the welfare of dogs, and (2) the protection and advancement of the interests of dogs and persons connected with dogs. Those interests include not only pure bred dogs, but also those that are in need of rescue and adoption regardless of their parentage.

The prospect of having greater representation for animals in court proceedings is a noble one. In pursuit of that aim, however, this bill is ill advised and fraught with significant problems. Several areas of concern arise regarding its present features:

- It would essentially establish legal "personhood" for domestic and farm animals in this state, a precursor to legalizing guardianship status for those animals. In effect, those steps would relegate the owner of the animal to the status of custodian, guardian or trustee, thus running counter to property rights under existing law.
- The animal advocate could be other than an attorney-at-law. This would appear to create a new category of "legal paraprofessionals" permitted to practice limited law in court proceedings representing animal "clients".
- Limits on the investigative powers conferred upon the animal advocate are not specified.
- No qualification training requirements for an animal advocate with regard to investigatory procedures are specified.
- No constraints, if any, in the animal advocate's conduct of any investigation undertaken are specified. Would that investigation more properly and effectively be conducted by a law enforcement or other officer?
- How would the selection of a volunteer advocate be determined by the Department of Agriculture?

April 5, 2013