

Testimony Concerning HB 5844

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I am pleased to learn that the Judiciary Committee is considering HB 6690, which would allow for a court advocate to speak on behalf of abused animals.

I am a registered voter in Clinton, and have performed a variety of volunteer tasks for organizations concerned with animal rescue, health, and welfare. As an epidemiologist, I donate time to assist veterinarians with research involving the health and welfare of companion animals.

As you know, there are many forms of animal abuse, both physical and psychological. One need go no further than the case of Michael Vick, but there are many, many more cases that fall under the radar. I would like to address the need for this bill from the several points of view.

(1) As a volunteer for dog rescue organizations, I have seen many different forms of abuse, ranging from severe physical abuse to complete neglect. Even when dogs are rescued from their abusive situations, they often require long periods of rehabilitation. Many can be only partially rehabilitated, retaining their fear of many situations and people. Some animals, unfortunately, can never be rehabilitated. Because animals are sometimes considered mere property with no rights of their own, it can be difficult to rescue them even from known abusive situations. This bill would go a long way towards giving them a second chance in life. Better yet, one would hope that the bill would serve to deter abuse from occurring in the first place.

(2) Ample research suggests that people who abuse animals often go on to abuse human beings, including children and spouses or partners. Thus, taking a stand against abusing animals can prevent cruelty to human beings as well as to animals.

(3) In a civilized society there is no place for purposeful cruelty to other creatures. It is simply unacceptable. Animals are not inanimate objects, but feel pain and psychological abuse, as we humans do. Very few things are as upsetting as seeing a poor helpless creature who through no fault of his/her own has been subject to cruelty, sometimes for many years, with no way to escape. No creature should be purposely subject to pain and other forms of abuse. Animals absolutely need an advocate in court, just as humans do.

Connecticut is showing itself to be among the most reasonable and compassionate states in the union. Passage of HB 6690 would greatly help both animals and humans and would further the reputation of Connecticut as being among the most sensible and humane states in the country.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

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