

**April 5, 2013**

**Judiciary Committee Public Hearing Testimony**

**HB 6690 AN ACT CONCERNING COURT PROCEEDINGS AND THE PROTECTION OF ANIMALS.**

Testimony from Joseph Kastrup  
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Our Companions Animal Rescue Volunteer  
Member, CT Votes for Animals

Dear members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify IN SUPPORT of H.B. 6690.

As someone whose family has gotten so much enjoyment and love from our pets and one that has adopted numerous dogs and cats over the years I strongly encourage you to support and pass this bill which will allow court-appointed advocates for animals during legal proceedings that concern the animals' welfare or custody. I have seen firsthand the abuse of animals in some that I have adopted. Sometimes it is visible and you can see the injuries in their physical condition. Other times you cannot see the physical scars but you can certainly sense the emotional and behavior scars from being abused. No animal deserves to be treated like this.

The animals do deserve advocates for their well-being and welfare, someone to speak for them. There have been far too many cases in which animals have been abused, whether by stabbing, shooting, hanging, dragging, beating or starvation. This abusive behavior rarely results in penalties that match the severity of the violent crime.

Violent behavior should be treated seriously in our courts, and victims of abuse, whether human or non-human, deserve to be represented justly. Studies support that abusive and violent behavior against animals can often lead to future and escalating violent behavior toward people.

The bill would also document the animal's injuries and level of suffering, and help the court make decisions for the animal's welfare. I thank you for considering my testimony on this important piece of legislation.