

April 5, 2013

Judiciary Committee Public Hearing Testimony

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

Testimony from Marlene T. Wilhelm

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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.

In the past decade there have been several high profile animal abuse cases in CT and MA where a perpetrator has caused injury, inflicted pain, maimed, mutilated and in most cases caused death to an animal in the most heinous and egregious manner humanly imaginable.

In all cases the assailants were convicted but sadly walked away with either little more than a slap on the hand or a short prison term.

However, I do believe that had an animal advocate been present during the hearings including the sentencing phase - to give voice to those animals that did not possess their own - that much stiffer penalties would have been levied to those responsible for their crimes.

It is important for lawmakers and those hearing civil and criminal animal abuse cases to fully understand through detailed testimony the extent of how these animals suffered at the hands of their attackers. I believe it is only then that appropriate ie tougher sentences will be handed down.

These tougher sentences would send a strong message that the CT courts will prosecute offenders of animal abuse to the highest extent of the law possible and act as a deterrent to others.

Our animals deserve better treatment in the court system than they currently are afforded. It is time that CT takes animal abuse seriously and that sentencing finally reflects the extent of the crime metered out to these helpless animals.

I strongly support having an animal advocate present at court proceedings to protect the rights of all animals in the CT judicial system and urge you to do the same.

I thank you for considering my testimony on this important piece of legislation.