

April 5, 2013

Testimony from:

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Subject: Judiciary Committee Public Hearing Testimony

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

Dear members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of H.B. 6690.

Since animals obviously cannot advocate on their own behalf, it is important to establish a process for appointing an advocate to investigate and advocate for the welfare or custody of an animal that is the subject of a civil or criminal court proceeding. H.B. 6690 will allow court-appointed advocates for animals during legal proceedings that concern the animals' welfare or custody, much like we do for children. Not only would this bill provide an advocate in court, but it would also document the animal's injuries and level of suffering, and help the court make decisions for the animal's welfare.

Passage of this bill would not only provide protection for the animals, but as I see it, it will also send a message to abusers of animals. There have been so many stories about animals being tortured, burned, just terrible stories that I'm sure you have heard about on television or read about in the newspaper. If advocates could step into animal abuse situations early on, it would likely prevent more violent activity from taking place in the future. There is the awareness that those who commit animal cruelty are potentially dangerous to society in general and it is apparent that stricter penalties should be considered to match the severity of these animal abuse crimes. Victims of abuse, both human and animals, need a voice and deserve to be represented justly.

I thank you for considering my testimony on this important piece of legislation and urge you to support H.B. 6690.

Patricia A. McGuiness