April 5, 2013
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing Testimony
HB 6690 AN ACT CONCERNING COURT PROCEEDINGS AND THE PROTECTION OF ANIMALS.

Testimony from Susan B. Linker
7 Sunset Lane, Bloomfield, CT
CEO, Our Companions Animal Rescue
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.

Animals, like children, cannot advocate on their own behalf. In Connecticut, children often have court-appointed advocates to speak on their behalf during cases of abuse. This bill, if passed, will allow court-appointed advocates for animals during legal proceedings that concern the animals' welfare or custody.

Advocates for animals are desperately needed in our state. There have been many cases, far too many to recall, in which animals that have been horribly abused, whether by stabbing, shooting, hanging, dragging and beating. Yet the outcomes of their cases rarely result in penalties that match the severity of the violent crime.

Not only would this bill provide an advocate in court for an egregiously injured animal, but it would also document the animal's injuries and level of suffering, and help the court make decisions for the animal's welfare.

Violent behavior should be treated seriously in our courts, and victims of abuse, whether human or non-human, deserve to be represented justly. Our society needs not only to speak for our voiceless creatures, but we need to take such violent acts of animal cruelty seriously, as it has been proven time and time again that cruelty to animals is a precursor to future and escalating violent behavior toward people.

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