

Testimony Concerning HB 5566
An Act Concerning Child Safety by Restricting the Placement of Leghold Traps

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I would like to express my support of HB 5566, An Act Concerning Child Safety by Restricting the Placement of Leghold Traps. I understand the legislature is facing many very tough decisions regarding how best to protect Connecticut's children from the myriad threats in their environment. I have tremendous respect and appreciation for the hard work lawmakers are doing every day to find the right answers. But I believe the decision of whether or not leghold traps should be placed in the vicinity of children is an easy one.

While many children have miraculously managed to avoid being ensnared by leghold traps, family pets have not been so lucky. Others here today will provide testimony to the casualties and mutilation caused to cats and dogs by these indiscriminate, monster machines. I was struck recently by an op-ed piece in the *Greenwich Times* last month, by Betsy Underhill, titled "Trapped: From heavenly to horrible in a snap" that eloquently described the horror and panic experienced when a loved one - in this case, her dog - is ruthlessly captured in a trap. She was compelled to write the op-ed because "as a person who has lived in this town for 30 years, we need to all step back and examine what we need to do to make sure our town is a pleasant and safe place for all people with all different needs and wants." She continued: "My concern, after last weekend, is how best to enjoy nature, and all it has to offer, if I have to worry about hunters and trappers." I fear that it may only be a matter of time before her terrifying experience plays out more frequently against children. Indeed she asked "What if it were your dog or child who stepped on one of their traps?"

Leghold traps may also threaten our children's innocence. The jaws of a leghold trap are highly indiscriminate, and left unattended for several hours at a time. Imagine the trauma a child might experience if they came upon a trap with an animal in it, worst of all a cat or a dog. To preview what this child might see, simply google "leghold traps" and take a look at the images. I hope you will agree that we should take every precaution to make sure no child ever sees this type of gruesome scene.

Finally, I'd like to add that leghold traps are altogether illegal or heavily restricted in many states, including some of our closest neighbors: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Jersey. These states have fully recognized that leghold traps threaten our sense of peace and safety while enjoying the outdoors, and have taken action accordingly. I strongly encourage you to pursue further restrictions in Connecticut as well, as part of a larger effort to shelter our children from harm this session.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify, and I hope you will continue to support and even strengthen this bill.

Thank you for your support of this bill.

