

HB 5566:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 5566: An Act Concerning Child Safety by Restricting the Placement of Leghold Traps

Dear Honorable Members of the Children Committee:

My family and I are registered voters in the Town of Stonington and I strongly urge you to support HB 5566: to restrict placement of leghold traps. In addition to being cruel, traps are non-selective - posing a danger to all living things.

As a teacher, child welfare is important to me and this bill would help protect children and companion animals by putting certain restrictions on where leghold traps are placed – such as near elementary schools, child day cares, parks and playgrounds.

Furthermore, as a wildlife rehabilitator for the State of Connecticut, I have seen the devastation caused by these indiscriminant torture devices (as evidenced by numerous accounts reported every year of unintended “non-target” animals caught in these traps). Even animals that are rescued from these traps must often be euthanized due to the severity of their injuries. Recently, a family friend discovered her cat caught in a leghold trap (necessitating the amputation of one of its legs).

In addition, I urge you to support the provision in this bill that requires trappers to report non-target catches (such as pets) to DEEP. Also, I would ask that HB 5566 be amended - adding a provision to include body-crushing traps, also known as conibear traps. Although meant to kill animals by breaking their spines, body-crushing traps only do so when the target animal enters the trap perfectly – conditions very difficult to control in nature. When not killed outright, these traps cause immense suffering. Body-crushing traps pose an unacceptable safety risk to pets and children alike.

The State of Connecticut needs to be more proactive regarding the protection of its children and pets/wildlife. Eight states have already banned or severely restricted the use of the body-crushing and/or leghold traps (including our neighbors Massachusetts and Rhode Island). Surely we in Connecticut can protect our communities from these horrific, needless devices. This is especially true considering that the vast majority of citizens in this state are non-trappers.

Thank you for holding a public hearing on this important matter, and we ask that when it comes up for your voting consideration, that you vote in SUPPORT of HB5566.

Thank you.

Rosamund Downing and Family
39 Moss St.
Pawcatuck, CT 06379