

February 20, 2013

Dear Representative Urban, Senator Bartolomeo, and Honorable Members of the Children Committee:

I am writing in support of HB 5566, which would restrict the placement of leghold traps.

I am a registered voter in Darien, Connecticut, and this bill is very important to me.

I have to say that I am extremely disappointed that this bill does not entirely ban leghold traps as these traps are not only cruel to wildlife, but also pose a danger to children and domestic animals.

I have had the unfortunate experience of witnessing the resulting damage of a leghold trap to an animal. I was visiting my parents who reside in Stamford, Connecticut. An abandoned, longhaired, front declawed cat showed up at the sliding glass door at the back of their house with an injury that appeared to have maimed her. She was only able to stand using her two front legs and left back leg. Her right back foot was bloodied and hanging straight down. She was meowing in distress. I brought her to my veterinarian who examined her and was appalled by her injury. He asked me, "How did this cat's ankle become mutilated?" As he examined further, he realized that this cat had been the victim of a leghold trap. The veterinary specialist who performed the surgery agreed with my veterinarian's assessment. A local nonprofit cat organization, Friends of Felines, and I covered the cost of the surgery and follow-up visits. I personally nursed this cat back to health. (See attached photo.) Fortunately, she recovered and was placed in a loving home. However, the majority of the time, these stories do not have happy endings.

Many vulnerable, innocent domestic and wildlife animals fall prey to leghold traps, causing them to suffer excruciating pain and die horrible deaths. Why are leghold traps still in existence? What purpose do they serve? They are devices of cruelty and torture. The practice of using such a trap is inhumane and barbaric.

As a resident of Connecticut, I respectfully and **STRONGLY** urge you to please, if not ban, at the very least, restrict the use of leghold traps in our progressive state of Connecticut. By doing so, further harm will be prevented to animals and children, all of whom are vulnerable to the actions of others.

Thank you for your time and for holding a public hearing on this important matter. When it comes up for your voting consideration, please vote in support of HB5566.

Sincerely,
Evana Gatto
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