



Testimony Before the Public Health Committee
HB 6591 An Act Requiring the Euthanization of Any Cat or Dog to be Performed by a Licensed
Veterinarian
March 20, 2013

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, Senator Welch, Representative Srinivasan, Members of the Public Health Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding **HB 6591, An Act Requiring the Euthanization of Any Cat or Dog to be Performed by a Licensed Veterinarian**. We represent the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association, which includes over 95% of Connecticut-licensed veterinarians among its members.

It has been conventional wisdom that euthanasia is a veterinary medical procedure, that the techniques required to perform it: veterinary medical assessment, behavioral assessment, drug dosage calculation, venipuncture, catheterization, cardiac function assessment and affirmation that death has occurred are all aspects of the practice of veterinary medicine under the law. CGS: Chapter 384: Section 197 makes that clear.

Further, the drugs required to perform euthanasia can only be purchased by a licensed veterinarian who informs the vendor of their state license number with renewal date and their state and federal controlled substances dispensing registration numbers. Only a licensed veterinarian is permitted to possess, use or dispose of these medications and the record keeping necessary to use them are the sole responsibility of a licensed veterinarian.

Thus, I ask you to ponder the following questions:

How did it come to pass that only the Connecticut Humane Society is exempt?

Why does the exemption continue to exist?

Why is there no similar exemption for all organizations that perform this work?

The CVMA has testified about the CHS exemption in the past, and we reiterate our position that it remains inappropriate and further, is unnecessary, inasmuch as the CHS employs licensed veterinarians who can oversee and delegate the task as necessary.

The CVMA believes veterinary medicine should be practiced by licensed veterinarians in this state, as it is in other states. Euthanasia is a veterinary treatment, that outside of law enforcement related urgencies, requires the judgment and skills of a veterinarian to be humanely and properly performed.

As there is no shortage of state licensed veterinarians willing to work with state humane organizations to fulfill their needs, I urge you, on behalf of the animal owning public and our animals, to eliminate any exceptions allowing lay personnel employed by humane organizations to administer euthanasia. Please restore euthanasia as a treatment properly administered by veterinarians.

The CVMA support the language submitted to the Committee today by Representatives Urban and Camillo, which was the original intention of "Buddy's Law." We have attached that language and encourage your support.

Thank you.

Eva Ceranowicz DVM, Chair, Government Relations Committee
Chris Gargamelli DVM, President
Arnold L. Goldman DVM, AVMA Delegate
Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association

Language for HB 6591

"Sec. 1. (NEW) (Effective from passage) (a) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes, whenever any cat or dog is euthanized, such euthanization shall be performed in a humane manner by a licensed veterinarian, provided nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the euthanization of any cat or dog while such cat or dog is attacking a person or another animal under circumstances where a reasonable person would consider such attack life-threatening to a person or another animal or likely to cause serious physical injury to a person or another animal. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to apply to the euthanization of any farm animal or livestock or to the euthanization of any cat or dog by any law enforcement officer in the course of his or her duties.

(b) Any person who violates the provisions of this section shall be fined not more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

(c) It shall be a defense to prosecution under this section that such person euthanized such cat or dog with a life-threatening injury in order to prevent such cat or dog's further suffering