



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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March 20, 2013

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Public Health Committee
Room 3000, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 240-0560

Re: HB 6591, An act requiring the euthanasia of any cat or dog to be performed by a licensed veterinarian

Dear Co-Chair Gerratana, Co-Chair Johnson, and Honorable Members of the Public Health Committee,

On behalf of the Connecticut supporters of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), I submit this letter in **SUPPORT of changes to HB 6591**, with the understanding that the language of the bill will be changed to reflect that all euthanasia be performed by licensed veterinarians (under most circumstances), and will include criminal penalties for non-compliance.

The euthanasia of animals has been acknowledged by most animal protection organizations, including The HSUS, as an appropriate and humane means of ending the suffering of an animal in physical distress. It is also used widely to end the lives of animals who have severe behavioral problems, including aggression, and cannot be adopted into an appropriate new home because they pose a threat to the health and safety of people or other animals.

The use of euthanasia to end the lives of healthy, adoptable animals is more controversial. The practice is still conducted in many parts of the United States for dogs and cats because open-admission shelters and animal control agencies do not turn away animals and do not have sufficient space to house all of the animals who need shelter. These public and private facilities face the lose-lose choice of euthanizing healthy animals or turning them away.

The HSUS advocates the use of a wide range of tools—including training and education of the pet-keeping public to reduce the frequency of animal relinquishment, public and private spay and neuter programs to slow the birth rate for animals, active promotion of adoptions of shelter animals, and aggressive policies to discourage excessive breeding of animals, especially from puppy mills—to create a social environment where the number of people seeking to adopt animals is roughly equivalent to the number of homeless animals.

The HSUS is committed to pursuing a continuing program of investigation, study, and training related to acceptable euthanasia methods. We recommend for use only those methods that cause a rapid loss of consciousness and that cause minimal pain, distress, and suffering in the animal. We oppose any euthanasia methods or techniques that do not meet these humane principles.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Annie Hornish
Connecticut State Director
The Humane Society of the United States
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