



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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Testimony in Support of HB 5707, SB 352 and SB 361

Environment Committee

March 20, 2015

Dear Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, Senator Chapin, Representative Shaban, and honorable members of the Environment Committee:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on the several bills today.

Testimony in Support of HB 5707: AN ACT REQUIRING CERTAIN HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES THAT CONDUCT RESEARCH USING CATS OR DOGS TO OFFER SUCH CATS OR DOGS TO ANIMAL RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS PRIOR TO EUTHANIZING ANY SUCH CAT OR DOG AND PROVIDING FOR THE PROPER SHELTERING OF DOGS.

The first bill comes from two important bills that were merged together to form HB 5707. Both of these bills are equally important and have merit.

The first part of HB 5707 regards animals, mostly Beagles rescued by the CT Beagle Freedom Project from animal testing facilities. I was contacted by this group last year regarding their efforts to allow these dogs to be given the opportunity to be adopted instead of euthanized. I refer to this bill as the "2nd chance" bill. It is simply giving innocent animals a 2nd chance to have their freedom back after a life spent subjected to the tortures of animal testing.

The second part of HB 5707 addresses the tethering bill that previously passed the legislature and has assisted Animal Control Officers (ACO) greatly in their work. Apparently, there was a problem with the original language of the bill and they are seeking additions to the language. Simply put, not all residents use common sense when it comes to the basic welfare of domestic animals. Story after story from ACO's and animal welfare organizations clearly show animals being left outside in extreme weather with no access to shelter, food, or water. ACO's are asking for more tools in their tool box to help with this problem.

I am happy to work with the committee and the Department of Agriculture to improve the language of the tethering/shelter portion of the bill.

Testimony in Support of SB 352: AN ACT CONCERNING THE TASK FORCE ON THE HUMANE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS IN MUNICIPAL ANIMAL SHELTERS

The next bill I would like to support is SB 352. This task force has been doing very important work that will impact every municipal animal shelter in the state. This work is extremely complex and requires detailed analysis. I fully support extending the task force for another year.

Testimony in Support of SB 361: AN ACT INCREASING THE MAXIMUM PENALTY FOR PERSONS CONVICTED OF MALICIOUS AND INTENTIONAL ANIMAL CRUELTY

Lastly, I want to support SB 352. Too often those who maliciously and intentionally maim, mutilate, torture, wound or kill animals get off with a light punishment or accelerated rehabilitation which leaves no record of the severity of the crime committed. Animal abusers have been clearly linked by statistical evidence as reported by the FBI and other reputable organizations, to commit abuse against humans, especially children and other vulnerable victims.

As citizens, we rely on the judicial system to give the appropriate punishment to offenders and protect the public from dangerous individuals. Animal abusers are dangerous to the public and abusers who engage in these most heinous crimes need to be severely punished. The public also needs to be made aware of their crimes.

I appreciate the Committee making animal welfare a priority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenda L. Kupchick".

Brenda Kupchick