

# Emily J. Wasley

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Dear Co-chair Kennedy, Co-chair Albis, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

On the issue of gestation crates and battery cages, I encourage you to please accept this testimony in **SUPPORT of SB 361** with the addition of language that would prevent gestation crates from being used in Connecticut.

As the owner of an Australian Shepherd and a rescued Australian Shepherd/Border Collie mix, I'm passionate about "my breed" and absolutely love the challenge of training my dogs. They're exceptionally smart and so much fun to work with and play with. When we first brought home our purebred Aussie, Yuna, from an amazing breeder in Connecticut, I remember giving her a bath and looking into her pretty brown eyes. I decided then that I would give up meat and change my lifestyle to a cruelty-free one. I also knew then that we wanted to rescue a dog, and eventually our Aussie/BC mix, Link, came into our lives.

While my dogs are smart, I know that according to much scientific research and anecdotal stories, some pigs possess a degree of intelligence that would put even a Border Collie to shame. It is also suggested that, like elephants, pigs are potentially sentient and self aware.

I have written to legislators in the past and was happy to discover that many of you are passionate about animal rights and welfare. I also know that many legislators have rescued pets that have become a part of your family. When I look at the evidence of the mistreatment of pigs and other animals through the use of gestation crates and battery cages it makes my stomach turn. I could not imagine putting my dogs through that type of torture for an hour—let alone for their entire life.

Without specific legislation banning the use of gestation crates, Connecticut could become an increasingly attractive location for pork mega-factories, as many other states currently have bans on this cruel practice.

I do not judge others for their decision to eat pork and other meat products, and I respect everyone's personal choices as to what type of diet they follow. Up until three years ago, meat was a regular part of my diet despite my dedication to and advocacy for animal welfare. What confuses me is the inequality in how we treat animals. Crimes such as the running of puppy mills, dog abandonment, the torture and killing of cats and dogs, and other acts of animal cruelty in Connecticut is punishable by heavy fines and even prison time. Our citizens and government feel so strongly about the abuse of our pets, but some play ignorant to the well known fact that gestation crates and battery cages are a cruel but common practice.

As one of the 91% of Connecticut voters who are against gestation crates, I strongly support increasing the penalties for malicious and intentional animal cruelty, and ask that you add language to **SB 361** that would prevent gestation crates from coming to Connecticut. The intensive confinement of farm animals is already here in Connecticut – chickens confined in tiny

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cages at KofKoff Egg Farms in eastern CT -- and most Connecticut residents don't want to see further expansion of these types of cruel farming practices.

Additionally, I **OPPOSE Sunday hunting (HB 6034)**. Bow hunting is much more painful than hunting with firearms, which offer a much more precise and quick kill. I also **SUPPORT HB 5707**, which would provide adoption opportunities for dogs and cats used in certain experiments and which would define outdoor sheltering standards for dogs, which are some of the most important members of Connecticut families. The Beagle Freedom Project does incredible things for lab beagles.

I sincerely appreciate all that you, our legislature, have done to help protect animals, particularly in the last few years. You have made a big difference and I genuinely thank you for it. I will be following this issue closely and hope for a positive outcome in the passage of **SB 361**.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily J. Wasley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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