

Moniz-Carroll, Rhonda

From: Nancy Kennedy <nancy.kennedy@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 01, 2015 3:30 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: H.B. No. 6187

H.B. No. 6187 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF ANIMALS THAT ARE THE SUBJECT OF CRIMINAL COURT PROCEEDINGS.

I write in support of the above-referenced bill.

For nearly a decade, I have been an attorney at the Hartford law firm of Alix, Yale & Ristas, LLP; I have been a firm partner since 2009. I was born and raised in Connecticut, and am a long-time resident of the Broad Brook section of East Windsor. I am also an Adjunct Professor and a Supervising Clinical Attorney at the University of Connecticut School of Law, although I am writing in my capacity as an individual citizen of Connecticut.

My life has been enriched immeasurably by animals. My family has always had several pets, and even today my parents make their home on a 65-acre nature preserve. It has been our unique privilege to observe the natural world from this perspective, and a particular joy to witness the life cycles and habits of a wide variety of animals, both wild and domesticated. These experiences taught me that every animal is sentient and resilient, with its own character, consciousness, ambition, senses of order and play - none of which will surprise anyone who has ever spent time with a companion animal.

This background, together with my volunteer activities at a local no-kill animal shelter, exposed me to the cruelty and suffering visited upon defenseless animals by humans, all too often as the result of intentional abuse or sheer neglect. Studies have shown that animal abuse is frequently part of serial killers' and other violent criminals' history. At the same time, research has proven the mental and physical health and rehabilitative benefits associated with animal care and interaction, for example, to veterans, prisoners, the elderly and infirm.

All of this imbues me with deep compassion, and a sense of responsibility to speak for otherwise voiceless creatures. The bill at hand offers a special opportunity to fulfill this obligation.

As an attorney, I am educated in the field of Animal Law and would welcome the opportunity to serve as an animal advocate. Practice-based learning is a critical part of today's legal education, and an academic requirement to earn the degree of Juris Doctor in our state and others. During my work as a UConn Law Supervising Clinical Attorney, I witness students' confidence and competence develop through interaction with attorneys, other legal professionals, government officials and clients; this is growth that would not have been possible through classes and book-learning alone. When I select candidates for employment at my firm, an applicant whose resume features practical experience rises to the top of the list. In our highly competitive employment environment, Connecticut's law students deserve the leg up afforded by animal advocacy's invaluable clinical experience, under the supervision of attorneys like me, especially considering the low or no cost to taxpayers.

A primary aspect of my job as an attorney is to advise my client of the costs and benefits of a given transaction. In that framework, I see the proposed legislation as a "no-brainer" - all upside and no downside. For the aforementioned reasons, no one can seriously question the value of the contemplated program - to students, employers, pet owners, animal advocates and the community at large.

It is long past time to act. We have a duty to be the voice of our four-legged friends. Please do the humane thing, the decent thing, the right thing.

I urge you to support HB 6187.

Respectfully,

Nancy Kennedy, Esq.

2612 Canyon Ridge Drive

Broad Brook, CT 06016