

My name is Joseph Vernuccio and I am a life long Connecticut resident and responsible pet owner.

Simply put, I DO NOT SUPPORT HB 6187.

I am in complete agreement with the American Kennel club and the serious concerns they have with this flawed legislation.

AKC's POSITION ON HB 6187:

The AKC abhors any type of negligence or cruelty to animals and supports full enforcement of existing negligence and cruelty laws. However, AKC is concerned that the creation of court-appointed animal advocates as provided in HB 6187 will result in legal controversies about who is responsible for an animal, and ultimately impact the ability and rights of pet owners to freely choose the most appropriate course of care and treatment for their pets.

Based on the long-standing legal traditions of both the United States and the State of Connecticut, pets are considered the property of their owners while benefitting from laws governing their care and treatment. Traditionally, animal owners have the sole rights and responsibilities over the care of their animals. **However, under the provisions of HB 6187, individual owners could lose these ownership rights over their animals by having to give up those rights to third parties. As a result, appointees could use the courts to force a person to make decisions that they believe to not be in the best interest of their animal.**

Additionally, such advocates are usually reserved to protect the interests of minors or other people lacking legal capacity. Animals do not fall into those categories.

Neighboring Rhode Island already has guardianship language in its animal ownership laws, while Connecticut is a pure property law state. When used by legislatures to describe the relationship between people and animals, guardianship gives rise to a lack of complete ownership and legal representation. While Rhode Island's laws may permit such advocates, Connecticut's laws are not set up to create legal advocates for animals, which under the law are considered property. Any discussion about whether animals should be treated as something other than property under Connecticut law should occur explicitly by the legislature and not incidental to the merits of HB 6187.

AKC believes that not only does Connecticut's current law protect animals and their owners well, but also that it does not confuse the roles incumbent to animal owners. Furthermore, the AKC believes this measure should not move forward without a clear statement of intent that the bill shall have no impact on the legal status of animals as property as provided in Sec. 22-350 of Connecticut's General Statutes.

I DO NOT SUPPORT this legislation and I know I speak for many other responsible pet owners who are unaware of the bad proposed bill you will be discussing.

If you have questions, feel free to contact me,

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