

The Humane Commission

City of New Haven, Connecticut

New Haven City Hall
165 Church Street
New Haven, Connecticut 06510

Commissioners:

Mark Bailey, *Chair*
Dagmar Moore
Sarah Morocco
Anushree Shirali

Cynthia Crooker, *designate*
Robin Johnson, *designate*

Ex Officio: *Chief of Police*

Testimony in Support of Connecticut H.B. 6187 and S.B. 1128

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Mark Bailey. I am a commissioner with the Connecticut State Task Force on the Humane Treatment of Animals in Municipal and Regional Shelters, as well as the chairman of the City of New Haven Humane Commission.

The City of New Haven Humane Commission (NHHC), representing the second largest municipality in Connecticut, is listed and described in section 7-17 under Title III of the New Haven General Code of Ordinances. On Monday, March 30, 2015, the NHHC unanimously voted to voice our support for **H.B. 6187**, which would enable a court advocate to provide expert opinion and testimony on behalf of an abused animal through independent investigation, and **S.B. 1128**, which would eliminate accelerated rehabilitation as a penalty option in animal cruelty cases.

The NHHC, with unyielding conviction, upholds that any form of abuse willfully inflicted on the animals we otherwise embrace as beloved companions and members of our families is abhorrent and degrades our culture toward dangerous levels of inhumanity. Furthermore, the linkage between animal abuse and violence against humans is undeniable and far too prevalent, as acknowledged by Connecticut's own cross-reporting law between child and animal abusers. When an animal is tortured, as was Desmond – a dog who originated from New Haven's animal shelter – it encourages similar violent acts against innocent humans, especially spouses and children.

It is imperative, therefore, that a message of extreme deterrence be sent throughout our state that such criminal activity will be met with a harsh and severe form of punishment, which reflects our social intolerance for such heinous behavior and injustice toward innocent animals. Accelerated rehabilitation cannot be an option, as it is the equivalent of a slap on the wrist for something far worse.

It is equally important, when an animal abuse case reaches trial, that expert and unbiased testimony be offered to help illuminate what the animal has endured, since this is not a matter of common knowledge or understanding among those untrained in humane welfare and animal behavior. In other words, it is crucial for our legal system to uphold an imperative that clearly shows the inhumanity of torture, as well as the impact animal abuse can have to deteriorate all efforts to build, support, and sustain a compassionate society.

Please help us in New Haven and throughout our state to prevent animal abuse by indicating clear factors of deterrence, which both forms of legislation discussed in this testimony, working together, can help to achieve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Bailey, chairman
City of New Haven Humane Commission

March 31, 2015