

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING March 20, 2015

Testimony submitted by Julie E. Lewin, President, Connecticut Council for Humane Education, Inc., 6 Long Hill Farm, Guilford, CT 06437

SUPPORT HB 5707 AAC 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.

Chairman Kennedy, Chairman Albis, and Members of the Environment Committee:

Gratitude to you for considering this critically important bill. A person who spent many years on the front lines of animal rescue and legislation, I urge you in the strongest terms to enact HB 5707. It advances my life's work.

Section I. Releasing some cats and dogs from research facilities to rescue groups:

It's the only, decent, just, and civilized thing to do. These animals have been forced to sacrifice so very much. Let them experience--finally--the love and comfort and freedom of a home. It's the least we, our society, should do for them.

Section II. Clarified shelter requirements for dogs kept outside:

There is a grave, critical need, and legislation is the only remedy.

I was a daily animal rescuer for many years, coming across many suffering dogs myself and getting calls around the clock from strangers desperate to save an animal from an inhumane situation.

Imagine how many dogs have suffered over the years without the protections of this language.

You come across an animal in uncomfortable weather. With only a lean-to. Or on an open porch while heavy snow falls in bitter cold. Or with a dog house with no bedding inside or wet blankets. Or a dog in a garage, with no way to maintain body heat in it. With pointed ears subject to frostbite.

The situation is reported to the local animal control department. The officer views the dog and concludes "shelter meets legal requirements." Even officers from the Department of Agriculture's Canine Control Division have made such determinations.

I wonder how many dogs in Connecticut have perished? How many this winter? Nothing in the existing 53-247 suggests that adequate shelter requires mere survival, although that is how it is interpreted. Many shelters said to pass the legal test do not guarantee survival.

I ask that the language below be inserted after the new section (d):

Nothing in this section shall indicate that an outside shelter used as primary housing is necessarily proper or adequate for every dog, depending on the dog's size, age, fur, other characteristics, and physical condition.

Respectfully submitted, *Julie E. Lewin*