



CONNECTICUT FEDERATION OF DOG CLUBS  
AND RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERS, INC.

Madam/Mr. Chairman, Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Connecticut Federation of Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners, Inc. (the “CFD”) is made up of over forty (40) dog clubs representing owners of pure breed dogs that participate in conformation, obedience, agility, and hunting/tracking events. CFD’s mission is to promote responsible dog ownership and the general welfare of dogs and their owners. **CFD opposes HB 6187.**

While we acknowledge the intention of this bill is to protect animals in criminal proceedings, we believe it has the potential to undesirably alter the relationship between the owners and the animals they own and love, beyond the courtroom.

By providing for an independent “animal advocate” on the request of any party with legal standing apart from the animal’s owner, we believe HB 6187 will provide an incentive for activists and activist organizations to become parties to various proceedings, and will lead to legal mischief as a result. Third party interference with the ownership rights of animal owners will inevitably extend far beyond the particular case or cases at hand, ultimately degrading the ownership rights of all animal owners. 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.

Since in the case of animal cruelty allegations, animal welfare is already overseen by state and municipal officials, appropriate safeguards currently exist to ensure animal cruelty is identified and punished. The state and municipalities actively interpret the laws and adjudicate offenses, including animal cruelty offenses. The perceived need to appoint a separate animal advocate would imply that neither of these safeguards is adequate. We disagree with that premise.

Our legal system does acknowledge that animals are unique, feeling creatures. While they do not have the same legal status as people, the law does recognize that they may not be treated like inanimate personal property. Therefore animals have special legal protections now, including laws requiring humane care, and laws criminalizing abuse, neglect and cruelty.



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If the intention of HB 6187 is to more aggressively discourage inhumane animal care behaviors, then harsher penalties for those who engage in cruel behavior towards animals is the appropriate remedy. The appointment of separate advocates will not further that end and may in fact have legal consequences beyond a given criminal case or cases. The CFD would be in strong support of harsher penalties for cruelty, rather than inclusion of additional parties or animal advocates in criminal proceedings. CFD believes this measure is ill advised and should be defeated.

Thank you for your consideration.

Laurie Maulucci,  
President

Mabel M. Diamond,  
Chair, Legislative Committee