

**TESTIMONY OF DEBORAH MCKEOWN**  
**March 30, 2015**  
**SUPPORT of HB 6187, AN ACT CONCERNING COURT PROCEEDINGS AND THE**  
**PROTECTION OF ANIMALS**  
**and**  
**SUPPORT of SB 1128, AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF ACCELERATED**  
**REHABILITATION IN THE CASE OF ANIMAL ABUSE**

Dear Co-Chair Coleman, Co-Chair Tong, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Please accept this testimony in SUPPORT of HB 6187, which would establish a process for appointing an advocate for an animal that is the subject of a criminal court proceeding, and in SUPPORT of SB 1128, which would prevent persons charged with committing animal abuse from using accelerated rehabilitation.

HB 6187 will help to facilitate animal cruelty prosecutions by ensuring appropriate representation for the victims. We need to give a voice to these abused animals. They need an advocate to protect their lives and ensure that they are treated humanely. As victims, these animals deserve their day in court with fair representation.

SB 1128 will help to ensure that violence toward animals is taken seriously and promotes appropriately severe penalties as well as a record of these crimes in cases where people are responsible for causing animals to suffer. It's shocking how few animal abuse and cruelty cases are actually prosecuted. How much do these animals need to suffer before we take notice and action? In order to make an impact and stop the abuse, we need to ensure that there are severe consequences for committing violence against animals. Accelerated rehabilitation should NOT be an option in these cases. There's a strong correlation between animal abuse, domestic violence and violence against other people. Animal cruelty cases need to be taken with the seriousness they deserve.

Yours truly,

Deborah McKeown  
19 Patrick Drive  
Seymour, CT 06483  
203-888-5370