

Testimony Concerning HB 6187 and SB 1128
Judiciary Committee, April 1, 2015
Attorney Kristin M. Song
The Little Pink Shelter
www.pinkshelter.com

I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Bills HB 6187 and SB 1128.

I have been involved with animal rescue for many years. I have served as a Board member for a local cat shelter, adopted many animals from rescue organizations including a horse from a kill pen. I am currently working closely with The Little Pink Shelter. The Little Pink Shelter has rescued hundreds of dogs and puppies slated for death. Working with these organizations has been the most rewarding experience of my life.

In the late 1990's, I worked in the criminal courts as an attorney. I remember being in court one day when an animal abuse case was called. After hearing the facts of the case, I was so confident that the defendant (who admitted abusing his horse) would receive the maximize penalty under the law. That did not happen. The defendant got a slap on the wrist and he walked out of court with a big smile on his face. I will never forget that case because there was no justice for that horse and the abuser walked out knowing that he could do it again and most likely nothing would happen to him. That horse did not have an advocate fighting for him. That is why HB 6187 is so important. These animals need someone to advocate and fight for them. They need a VOICE. So many of our dog rescues are neglect or abuse cases-we are overwhelmed cleaning up after those who abuse or neglect their dogs/puppies. It's exhausting and the abusers hardly ever pay the price. My personal dog Dylan is a rescue. His first owner tried to drown him and his littermates. Thankfully, a passerby stopped the owner committing the act. Unfortunately, it was too late for Dylan's brother who was drowned. I could fill pages and pages of neglect and abuse stories.

In addition, there have been many studies showing a link between abuse of animals and violence against people. That is why SB 1128 is so important. A 2001-2004 study by the Chicago Police Department "revealed a startling propensity for offenders charged with crimes against animals to commit other violent offenses toward human victims." In the study, 36 convicted multiple murderers were questioned about abusing animals. Forty-six percent admitted abusing/torturing animals. In the school shooting between 1997 and 2001-ALL the boys had previously committed acts of cruelty towards animals. Abusing pets is one of the four predictors of domestic violence. Between 71-83% of women entering a battered women shelter reported that their partners either abused or killed the pets in their household! (www.humansociety.org/issues/abuse_neglect). This study is just one of many that show violence towards animals is just a stepping stone for the abuser who then goes on to commit acts of violence towards humans. The leniency has to stop if we are ever going to get the attention of the abusers. AR is not allowed for family violence crimes and is equally not appropriate for animal violence crimes. AR is for those individuals who have not been charged with a serious crime. Abusing animals is extremely serious and often leads to violence towards humans. It has to

stop and only YOU can make that happen.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Attorney Kristin M. Song, Guilford