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Via e-mail to: judtestimony@cga.ct.gov

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Re: **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.

I believe that HB 6187 will help to facilitate animal cruelty prosecutions by ensuring appropriate representation for the victims. I have been followed cruelty cases where no concern was given for the victim. Appointing a representative would encourage appropriate penalties to be applied. We must represent the voiceless if we are to stop a pattern of behavior that begins with animals and generally continues against those weaker than the perpetrator.

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. There is a clear link between violence towards animals and violence towards humans who are weaker than the perpetrator. Violence towards animals is a step towards escalating violence. Pet abuse is clearly associated with domestic violence.

Connecticut needs to take animal abuse more seriously. A 2013 research report by the Office of Legislative Research ([2013-R-0148](#)) describes the procedural outcome of animal cruelty offenses from 2002 through 2012 (n = 3,699). Table 1 shows that 51% of offenses were nolle (this means that the prosecutor decided not to prosecute), 33% were dismissed, 0.2 % resulted in findings of not guilty, and only 16% resulted in guilty findings.

I strongly encourage you to read the OLR report ([2013-R-0148](#)) in order to get the big picture view of how animal cruelty cases are treated in Connecticut, namely, that very few are prosecuted. These two bills will encourage animal cruelty cases to be taken with the seriousness they deserve.

Yours truly,

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