

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

In SUPPORT of HB 6187, please accept this testimony to establish a process for appointing an advocate for an animal that is the subject of a criminal court proceeding. Also in SUPPORT of SB 1128, accept this testimony to 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.

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.

Animals are sentient beings. We, therefore, need to take the topic of animal abuse more seriously. A 2013 research report by the Office of Legislative Research ([2013-R-0148](#)) describes procedural outcome of animal cruelty offenses from 2002 through 2012 (n = 3,699). Table 1 shows that 51% of offenses were nolle (meaning 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.

Please 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.

Another reason that underscores the importance of supporting these bills is that there are a number of studies that show a link between the abuse of animals and violence against people, property crimes, and drug or disorderly conduct offenses. It doesn't exist in isolation.

Thank you,

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