

**Testimony Concerning SB 1128
An Act Concerning the Use of Accelerated Rehabilitation
in the Case of Animal Abuse**

**JOAN LAMONT
ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER
PRESIDENT, CATS NORTHEAST**

March 31, 2015

I

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

Please accept this testimony in support of SB 1128, which would prevent persons charged with committing animal abuse from using accelerated rehabilitation.

I have found that in my experience both as an Animal Control Officer and as the president of a nonprofit animal welfare group, the majority of people involved in animal cruelty and neglect have a history of such behavior long before they are actually apprehended.

The defendant in one of my cases applied for Accelerated Rehabilitation by carefully timing his court-ordered letter advising me of his application for AR so that I would not receive it until the day he was actually due in court. Fortunately our prosecutor realized that he was attempting to circumvent the process, and continued his case to another date.

This defendant had had several opportunities to improve the standard of his pet care before the incident which led to his arrest. Although he made some temporary improvement, this was of short duration, and at the time of his arrest for animal cruelty, he had almost starved his dog to death. He was convicted and had numerous conditions imposed upon him, but in another court, he could have been granted AR, leaving him with no record to prevent him from easily acquiring another dog to suffer the same fate.

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

Joan Lamont
POB 345
Mansfield Center
860-429-7899