

**Judiciary public hearing April 1, 2015**

**Testimony in support of HB 6187 and SB 1128:**

Karen Laski

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**I support House bill 6187, An act concerning the protection of animals that are the subject of criminal court proceedings.**

I've been involved in animal welfare for over 40 years. Laws to protect animals from cruelty exist, but they are not enforced enough to be a deterrent. Animals are faceless and voiceless in courtrooms. Because they don't have adequate representation, officials aren't driven to prosecute offenders. We need to give animals a voice through volunteer advocates. These advocates will be given a chance to defend those who are so often left behind. Law students will be the animals' advocates and will gain experience by supporting the case in court for the animal who has been hurt or killed. The animal welfare community, veterinarians and the general public are on board with this bill.

**I also support Senate bill 1128, An act prohibiting the use of accelerated rehabilitation in the case of animal abuse.** I think it will be another deterrent to people harming animals if the person who commits the offense has to take some kind of responsibility for his or her actions.

Thank you for hearing these bills.

Karen Laski