

February 15, 2015

Committee on Children Public Hearing Testimony

Raised Bill No. 6725 AN ACT CONCERNING ANIMAL-ASSISTED THERAPY SERVICES

Dear members of the Committee on Children,

I am writing IN SUPPORT of H.B. 6725.

I am a member of Tails of Joy, Inc., an all-volunteer animal assisted therapy group serving Hartford, Tolland and Windham counties that was established in 1995 to provide therapy visits with dogs and other animals to those who need comfort or company in settings such as assisted living facilities, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, veterans groups and college and high school campuses. My dog Apollo and I became a registered therapy dog team in 2013. Since then, we have provided approximately 70 visits to The Institute of Living inpatient child and adolescent units and an additional 30 visits to local schools and colleges. In 2014 we received Crisis Response Team training and evaluation through Tails of Joy and participated in one call-out and in the large-scale Douglas Manor MCI Drill in May 2014.

Through our experiences as a registered therapy dog team, I have witnessed the positive and immediate impact that Apollo has on children and adolescents in crisis. The proposed language in Raised Bill No. 6725 will facilitate the coordination of animal assisted activities and therapeutic work currently being done in the aftermath of a tragedy in our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Noel-Freda
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Member and Crisis Response Team, Tails of Joy, Inc.