



**Substitute House Bill No. 5344**

**Public Act No. 16-30**

**AN ACT CONCERNING SUPPORT FOR CATS AND DOGS THAT ARE NEGLECTED OR TREATED CRUELLY.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2016*) (a) In any prosecution under section 53-247 of the general statutes, or in any court proceeding pursuant to section 22-329a of the general statutes or in the criminal session of the Superior Court regarding the welfare or custody of a cat or dog, the court may order, upon its own initiative or upon request of a party or counsel for a party, that a separate advocate be appointed to represent the interests of justice. If a court orders that an advocate be appointed to represent the interests of justice, the court shall appoint such advocate from a list provided to the court by the Commissioner of Agriculture pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. A decision by the court denying a request to appoint a separate advocate to represent the interests of justice shall not be subject to appeal.

(b) The advocate may: (1) Monitor the case; (2) consult any individual with information that could aid the judge or fact finder and review records relating to the condition of the cat or dog and the defendant's actions, including, but not limited to, records from animal control officers, veterinarians and police officers; (3) attend hearings; and (4) present information or recommendations to the court pertinent

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to determinations that relate to the interests of justice, provided such information and recommendations shall be based solely upon the duties undertaken pursuant to this subsection.

(c) The Department of Agriculture shall maintain a list of attorneys with knowledge of animal issues and the legal system and a list of law schools that have students, or anticipate having students, with an interest in animal issues and the legal system. Such attorneys and law students shall be eligible to serve on a voluntary basis as advocates under this section. The provisions of sections 3-14 to 3-21, inclusive, of the Connecticut Practice Book shall govern a law student's participation as an advocate under this section.

Approved May 26, 2016