

**Testimony Concerning HB 5344  
Judiciary Committee, 24 Feb 2016**

I thank the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to show my support for HB 5344 AN ACT CONCERNING SUPPORT FOR ANIMALS THAT ARE NEGLECTED OR TREATED CRUELLY.

An unsettling report from the Office of Legislative Research (2015-R-0262) found that from 2005-2015, 80% of the animal cruelty offenses were either not prosecuted (47%) or dismissed (33%). These statistics suggest that animal cruelty cases are not being taken seriously. Given the well documented link between violence towards animals and domestic violence, animal cruelty is a matter of public safety as much as it is a matter of animal welfare and the perpetrators of animal cruelty should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

HB 5344 will provide a volunteer court advocate for the animals, the victims who have no voice, bringing the cruelty cases to court and helping ensure the perpetrators receive the appropriate sentences.

I wouldn't want the person who starved, tortured, and killed a child to walk away with a slap on the wrist and clean record after a stint in therapy any more than I want the same outcome for the person who commits those same heinous acts against a defenseless animal.

Please support HB 5344.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Susan Armknecht  
Groton, CT