

**Testimony Concerning 5344**  
**February 24, 2016**  
**Stacey Christoforides**  
**Co-Founder of Lexi's Angels Rescue**

I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to express my support of 5344, Desmond's Law.

I strongly support this Bill that is brought before the Committee regarding the proposed law with regard to animal welfare and the judicial system. I currently work (and have worked) in a law firm for many years. I was pleased to see this Bill brought before you regarding animal cruelty and our court systems. I have recently followed pending cases within our State that tell me and others that it is imperative that we in CT do something to protect our animals and that it will no longer be a slap on the wrist for those who choose to do the unthinkable in abusing the voiceless. I inform you of the following cases pending in our court as of today.

1. ***State v. Amanda Calabrese***, pending in Norwalk, CT where this individual left a dog and cat in a vacant apartment for 2 weeks. She has now applied for accelerated rehabilitation. I wrote to both Judge Hernandez and the prosecuting attorney. (A copy of my letter is attached for your review.

2. ***State v. Rommy Rodrigues***, pending in Bridgeport, CT, where she beat puppy Dora to death for literally over 10 minutes and a neighbor heard the Dora crying. This case has been on the docket I believe over 28 times. This is outrageous that there is no one to be in that courtroom to monitor the case. I do plan on attending the trial when it finally is before the jury.

3. ***State v. Veronica Reyes***, pending in Bristol, CT, where she took two dogs and hung them and then buried them in her yard. A very heartbreaking story. I am following this case very closely but it is only in its preliminary phase and it is my understanding that she remains in custody.

We truly need to have someone in our courtrooms to see that these animals are given a voice, that their lives did matter. I believe it is our moral obligation as human beings to protect those who cannot protect themselves. As I am sure you are aware that the FBI is now monitoring animal abuse crimes. It is fair to say that there is a good chance that if one abuses animals, there is a good chance they will also hurt humans. There is a direct correlation between the two.

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

Thank you,

Stacey Christoforides  
Norwalk, CT