

Testimony concerning HB 5344
Judiciary Committee February 24, 2016

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Connecticut Votes for Animals, Board Member
Protectors of Animals, Volunteer

I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 5344, An Act Concerning Support for Animals that are Neglected or Treated Cruelly. HB 5344 would provide for a volunteer advocate to speak on behalf of animals in criminal court cruelty cases who are victims of abuse.

I spend the majority of my free time and resources working for animals. As a welfare advocate and rescuer, I have seen first-hand the abuse humans inflict on animals. I have seen and consoled terrified, abused dogs, and cats with severe injuries including embedded bullets, acid burns, and broken bones. I have seen neglect words cannot describe, and will never fade from my memory. I have sat in courtrooms monitoring pending abuse cases, only to face disappointment when perpetrators evade justice. It seems like every time I watch or read the news, there is yet another case of animal abuse, each one more alarming than the last. This must stop. One way to quell this violence is to enact stricter penalties to people who abuse animals. This includes giving the abused a voice.

Animal cruelty is an act of violence and studies prove that animal abusers often graduate to violence against people. The link is there, and even the FBI has begun to monitor animal abuse cases, thus monitoring abusers. Sadly, eighty percent of animal abuse charges are dismissed. The abusers, many times, simply walk free.

Animals deserve representation in the courtroom. HB 5344 will help make this happen. I kindly ask that you support this important and groundbreaking legislation.

Thank you,

Amy G Gagnon
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