Carroll, Rhonda

From: Shirley Hall <ctautumn@cox.net>
Sent: Sunday, February 21, 2016 11:33 AM
To: JudTestimony
Cc: zRepresentative Mark Tweedie
Subject: HB 5344 - An act concerning support for animals that are neglected or treated cruelly (Desmond's Law)

Please support HB 5344, which would establish a process for appointing an advocate to investigate and advocate for the welfare or custody of an animal that is the subject of a civil or criminal court proceeding.

This law would help to facilitate animal cruelty prosecutions by ensuring appropriate representation for the victims. Evidence for the need for adequate representation can be found in a November 2015 report by Connecticut's Office of Legislative Research which shows that between 2005 and 2015, only 3500 cases were brought under the animal cruelty statute and of those cases a full 80% never made it to Court (47% not prosecuted (nolled) and 33% were dismissed).

Reporting, investigating, and prosecuting animal cruelty can help take dangerous criminals off the streets. Police know that in homes where animal abuse is a problem, other issues are often concurrent. Acts of animal cruelty are linked to a variety of other crimes, including violence against people, property crimes, and drug or disorderly conduct offenses. Stopping animal abuse in children can help curb violent tendencies before they escalate to include violence against people. Indeed, a number of studies have drawn links between the abuse of animals, criminal violence, and domestic abuse.

More than a dozen states, including Connecticut, have cross-reporting laws; at least two dozen states have laws, including Connecticut, allow courts to include pets in protection orders in domestic violence situations; and at least two dozen states, including Connecticut, have counseling provisions in their animal cruelty laws.

Teaching humans to behave with kindness and respect toward animals will help build a more humane and better functioning civil society.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Shirley M. Hall

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