

**Testimony Concerning HB-5344
Judiciary Committee February 24, 2016**

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Director of Education for Bikers Against Animal Cruelty, Inc.**

I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to express my support of HB-5344 Desmond's Law and take a moment to explain why I feel this is so important to me.

Just last year in this State we've seen horrific acts against dogs, cats and other animals disappointed each time by the justice system. The problem is most people think that animals don't feel like humans or don't think like humans. So what if we were to put a toddler in the place of an animal. Sound crazy? Actually it's not, some animals have the intelligence level of a human toddler? Certain breeds of dog for example have the mental abilities of a 2.5 year old child and can understand upwards of 250 words!

What if a toddler was set on fire by a man who just wanted to see her burn? Or a toddler had acid poured on her back to see what will happen to her skin? What if a person threw a toddler out the car window on the I-91? Or if a mom shoved a bottle of vodka down her toddler's throat breaking her teeth and making her drink? What if a dad picked up a toddler by her feet and tossed her into the street? Or a babysitter hung a toddler from a tree by her neck?

Do you believe this toddler would experience fear? Would she understand she is in danger? Would she be helped if she cried out? Would she feel the pain being inflicted on her? I will tell you when you look into the eyes of an animal whose entire body is raw from being burned I promise you there is absolutely fear, absolutely pain and absolutely emotion in those eyes.

There is no difference in the horrific nature or in the sensory experience of these crimes. The only difference is who they are inflicted on – be it human, dog, cat or others – a living being is just that and taking away the right to live is murder no matter what.

So I pray that Connecticut will no longer enable these criminals, no longer be the State that doesn't punish people who torture and murder animals. Until this Bill is passed, Connecticut will continue to be seen as the enabler of animal cruelty. It's time to protect the innocent. Be the State finally said enough is enough, we care! Be State that puts an end to animal cruelty and creates animal justice!

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

Thank you,

Lisa M. Mingione
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