



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE BRENDA L. KUPCHICK  
ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-SECOND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

RANKING MEMBER  
HOUSING COMMITTEE

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING ROOM 4200  
300 CAPITOL AVENUE  
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

MEMBER  
ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE  
INSURANCE COMMITTEE

TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1423  
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8700  
HOME: (203) 336-1724  
Brenda.Kupchick@cga.ct.gov

Joint Committee on Judiciary  
Public Testimony  
February 24, 2016

#### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 5344

Good Morning Co-Chairs Senator Coleman, Representative Tong; Vice Chairs Senator Doyle, Representative Fox; Ranking Members Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas; and esteemed members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 5344. Animal cruelty is often a precursor for future violent acts against people. It is of extreme importance for our Judicial System to pay attention to the red-flags associated with crimes against animals. Animal cruelty is a strong indicator that serious treatment and proportionate sentences are followed.

According to a report conducted by the Office of Legislative Research (OLR), the judicial branch reported 3,513 offenses from 2005 to October 2015 that were brought before the courts under our current laws. Of those offenses, 631 (18%) resulted in a guilty finding, 55 (2%) resulted in a not guilty finding, 1,175 (33%) were dismissed, and 1,652 (47%) were nolle.

Far too many animal cruelty cases have been dismissed or nolle in our courts resulting in weakened sentences and anger management classes prescribed as treatment that may not be relevant to the underlying causes of animal abuse.

When these cases are met with accelerated rehabilitation sentences, the public has no way of knowing about the nature of the arrest.

When this idea was first proposed, it was considered unconventional and was met with skepticism, even by me. But after a review of cases reasonable people would believe would rise to the level of very serious, they were still not resulting in convictions. Placing animal advocates inside the courts to be a voice for defenseless innocent victims while sharing the serious nature of the violence could potentially change the judicial statistics, protect the public and at no cost to the state.

It is my hope HB5344 will be seriously considered and voted out of committee this year and at least be given a chance to become law.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important issue.