

**Testimony Concerning HB 5344**  
**Judiciary Committee, February 24, 2016**  
**Barbara Rudnick**  
**Member Connecticut Votes for Animals**

I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to express my support of HB 5344, An Act Concerning Support For Animals That Are Neglected Or Treated Cruelly .

Please accept this testimony in SUPPORT of HB 5344 which would provide for a volunteer advocate to get involved in criminal court cases regarding animal cruelty and speak on behalf of the innocent animals who are victims of abuse.

I have attended numerous animal abuse cases in the last 20 years. Someone has to care, we can not all turn our backs, hoping someone else will do something to save them and prevent it from happening again. None of the abusers in the cases I attended ever received a sentence that would deter them from harming again. In many cases they received nothing more than accelerated rehabilitation, or basically, no consequences at all for their abuse. Between 2005 and 2015, 80% of animal cruelty cases never even made it to court. I have listened with tears in my eyes of the precious souls tortured, drowned, kicked, stabbed, strangled, thrown from porches/stairs and one dog who had holes drilled into his head while trapped in a cage. This is why "Desmond's Law" is so important, someone needs to speak for them. This dog was severely abused and tortured to death, yet his abuser once again got away with "Accelerated Rehabilitation". How is it that the life of an innocent animal means so little to our society?

I have stopped trying to understand what type of human could possibly do such things because these individuals are not like you or I. They lack any kind of moral character or compassion. One individual had not only killed a neighbors cat by kicking it, (in front of the owners grand daughter) but also injured a police dog. He eventually went to jail for causing the death of two people in a car accident. Two additional people were also injured in the same accident. I often wonder, had the court taken his abuse of the animals more seriously and had he been in jail, would those individuals be alive today?

We MUST take these cases more seriously and someone MUST speak up for the poor animals that are victims of abuse. I beg you to support this legislation that will establish a volunteer advocate to represent animals in court who have been the victims of cruelty. We MUST reduce the number of cases dismissed and help ensure that the punishment fits the severity of the violence commmitted.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify and please help SUPPORT this important piece of legislation so Connecticut can be a state that is a leader for the rights of innocent animals.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Rudnick  
East Berlin, CT.