

February 24, 2016
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing Testimony

**Raised Bill 5344 AN ACT CONCERNING SUPPORT FOR ANIMALS THAT ARE
NEGLECTED OR TREATED CRUELLY**

Kathleen Sullivan
11 Gun Mill Road
Bloomfield, Connecticut
Member: CT. Votes for Animals & Our Companions Animal Rescue

I would like to thank the members of the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill 5344.

An OLR Research Report dated February 20, 2013 reported that of the 3699 animal cruelty cases in Connecticut brought under CGS 53-247 between 2002 and 2012, 594 (16%) were found guilty, 7 (0.2%) were found not guilty, 1,210 (33%) were dismissed, and 1,883 (51%) were nolle (i.e., the prosecutor decided not to prosecute). Animal cruelty should be taken more seriously than those numbers indicate!

Studies routinely show the relationships between child abuse, domestic violence, gangs, drugs and animal abuse in our society. In 2011 Connecticut passed a bill requiring the cross-reporting of child and animal abuse. Child abuse is punished under the law. The animal cruelty laws should also be diligently applied as part of the process of breaking the cycle of violence. Raised bill 6690 will help take a significant step in that direction.

The bill would provide a voluntary, qualified legal advocate for animals who are the innocent, voiceless victims of alleged abuse. The advocate would be knowledgeable about the specifics of the case, the nature of the needs and protection of animals, and the extent to which their victim can be protected under the law. When the court is able to get a thorough understanding of the victims' side of the case, hopefully they will have the courage and decency to bring the offenders to justice and change the statistics.

On behalf of citizens and animals throughout CT, I urge you to support Raised Bill 5344.