

Carroll, Rhonda

From: Lisa Taylor-Austin <lisataylorAustin@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2016 11:22 PM
To: JudTestimony
Cc: lorifognicholson@aol.com; Rep. Rose, Kim; rosadc.schedule@mail.house.gov; Annie Hornish; Attny John Mills; Rep. Urban, Diana; 'Lisa Taylor-Austin'
Subject: Testimony for 2/24/16 public hearing-- SUPPORT HB 5344 (support for animals that are victims of cruelty)

Dear Co-Chair Coleman, Co-Chair Tong, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Please accept this as my testimony (for public hearing held on February 24, 2016) in SUPPORT of HB 5344, An Act Concerning Support for Animals that are Neglected or Treated Cruelly. I vote, and this issue is important to me. I am also an expert witness in state and federal courts across the nation and am familiar with the legal process.

I support HB 5344 because:

Research has established strong links between violent behaviors toward humans and violent behaviors toward animals.. A 2001-2004 study by the Chicago Police Department "revealed a startling propensity for offenders charged with crimes against animals to commit other violent offenses toward human victims." Of those arrested for animal crimes, 65% had been arrested for battery against another person. (Degenhardt, B. 2005. *Statistical Summary of Offenders Charged with Crimes against Companion Animals July 2001-July 2005*. Report from the Chicago Police Department).

Of 36 convicted multiple murderers questioned in one study, 46% admitted committing acts of animal torture as adolescents (Cohen, W. (1996), Congressional Register, 142(141), Oct. 3.) And of seven school shootings that took place across the country between 1997 and 2001, all involved boys who had previously committed acts of animal cruelty.

A survey of pet-owning families with substantiated child abuse and neglect found that animals were abused in 88 percent of homes where child physical abuse was present (DeViney, Dickert, & Lockwood, 1983). A study of women seeking shelter at a safe house showed that 71 percent of those having pets affirmed that their partner had threatened, hurt or killed their companion animals, and 32 percent of mothers reported that their children had hurt or killed their pets (Ascione, 1998). Still another study showed that violent offenders incarcerated in a maximum security prison were significantly more likely than nonviolent offenders to have committed childhood acts of

cruelty toward pets (Merz-Perez, Heide, & Silverman, 2001).

Animal abuse and torture is now a class A -felony in all 50 states in America, yet in Connecticut a disturbing 80% of these types of cases were not prosecuted or were dismissed. (<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2015/rpt/pdf/2015-R-0262.pdf>) . Are we going to be the state that allows animal abuse to continue unaddressed, when there are laws in place against this type of abuse?

I own a dog and have had pets my entire life. Animals are our most vulnerable population because they cannot speak in the same language we do. They cannot verbalize their pain. They cannot verbalize who their abuser is. They cannot seek help. They have no one to advocate for them in court. They are victims. Victims without a voice. Victims that our state shamefully allows to be abused, tortured and neglected. You can change that by passing HB 5344.

Animal advocates in the courtroom would not cost tax payers a penny. By allowing attorneys and law school students to be volunteer to be their advocates in court, their interests are protected.

Thank you for your attention to this important bill. Our animals matter!

Best Regards,
Lisa

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