

**Testimony Concerning HB 5344
Judiciary Committee, February 24, 2016
Benjamin H. Teaford**

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.

I, like most citizens of Connecticut, am a lover of animals. And I was deeply dismayed to learn that 80% of animal cruelty charges brought against individuals in Connecticut are dismissed. Desmond, the inspiration for this bill, was an innocent dog who was abused and tortured to death. It is an outrage that the perpetrator in this case received only accelerated rehabilitation. In this case and similar cases, there is no justice for victimized animals and dangerous individuals are enabled to continue to commit violent acts.

A humane and just society treats animals with mercy and compassion. Desmond's law represents a significant step in moving toward a more compassionate society by giving a voice to victimized animals and discouraging human acts of abuse through harsher penalties.

Having earned a bachelor's degree in psychology, I have studied the strong correlation between violence toward animals and violence toward humans. Identifying and justly penalizing individuals who commit acts of violence toward animals would potentially enable law enforcement to prevent these dangerous individuals from harming human beings.

Desmond's law would provide justice for animals and benefit to society at no cost, as animals' legal representatives would be volunteers from law schools and firms.

Please help to provide justice for victimized animals and prevent future violence by supporting Desmond's Law. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Benjamin H. Teaford
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