

Carroll, Rhonda

From: Judy Umstead <jumstead1023@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 23, 2016 7:48 PM
To: JudTestimony
Cc: zRepresentative Craig Miner
Subject: HB5344

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 02-24-16) 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 know firsthand how important an advocate for animals is as I am an animal control officer. I am the officer for the towns of Bethlehem and Woodbury, and had my own animal cruelty case in November 2012 for the town of Bethlehem and seized 63 dogs. As we went thru 2 1/2 years of court battle it would have been so much more effective if the animals had an advocate. While lawyers were battling the animals were lost in the legal system.

Research has established strong links between violent behaviors towards humans and the violent behavior towards animals.

Law enforcement agencies must take violence towards animals seriously, and prosecutions must be encouraged. As animal control officers we try to do our jobs but aren't supported in courts because the laws don't protect the animals enough.

Unfortunately, the majority of cases are not prosecuted or dismissed.

Having court advocates for animals would be done at no cost by enlisting volunteer representation for animals from law students and law firms.

Teaching humans to behave with kindness and respect toward animals will help to build a more humane society.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Judy Umstead
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