

Testimony for **HB 5147** An Act increasing the maximum penalty for persons convicted of subsequent offenses of malicious and intentional animal cruelty.

**Environment Committee 2/19/16**

Karen Laski, Board member of CT Votes for Animals

I am writing to express my support for increasing the maximum penalty for subsequent offenses of animal cruelty because most people who are caught committing cruel acts are not punished and not recorded because their case is nolle or they are given accelerated rehabilitation.

I think this bill will expand awareness among the public that lawmakers take animal cruelty seriously and abuse to animals might happen less often because of the stakes involved. Going home and kicking the dog should not be a running joke.

According to the FBI, 68% of abused women reported that the abuser had also committed violence against their pets. Abuse of animals is a predictor of future violence to people. Only a tiny fraction of animal abusers in CT receive penalties and the crime is not recorded for most.

Since I was a teenager, I have always kept an eye out for people abusing animals and have found many neglectful situations in which animals were suffering on a daily basis. Trouble was and is, that most of these cases weren't against the law and "owners" of the animals laughed at my questions. I jumped at the chance to attend CT Votes for Animals first meeting in 2008. There is so much that needs to be done to insure that our animals are shielded from pain and suffering by creating and improving laws that protect their welfare.

Please pass this bill out of committee.

Thank you,

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