



CONNECTICUT FEDERATION OF DOG CLUBS
AND RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERS, INC.

Chairman and Members of the Environment Committee:

The Connecticut Federation of Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners, Inc. (the “CFD”) is made up of over forty (40) dog clubs representing owners of pure breed dogs that participate in conformation, obedience, agility, therapy dog and hunting/tracking events. CFD’s mission is to promote responsible dog ownership and the general welfare of dogs and their owners. **CFD opposes SB No. 228.**

We acknowledge the intention of this bill is to give additional moral and monetary support to pet owners for companion animals that have been intentionally injured or killed; however, we believe it may lead to unintended consequences if this bill is passed.

Currently, emotional harm caused by the injuring or killing of a pet is recoverable under a cause of action for intentional infliction of emotional distress. The act is considered to be against the owner, not the animal. Under current CT law, pet owners are permitted to recover the economic value of the pet, the cost of veterinary bills resulting from an alleged injury and other reasonable and necessary costs arising out of the injury. In addition, CT law allows punitive damages for injuring or killing a pet out of malice. These damages can be substantial depending on the case at hand. Non-economic damages are typically not applied in cases involving personal property (that would include animals).

Animal experts agree that significant negative consequences surface from allowing non-economic damages to be awarded in animal injury and death cases. The potential exists for an increase of legal liability, an increase of higher costs to pay for that liability for all involved in the care of the animal, and the possibility of an increased public health risk if the average CT pet owner can no longer afford basic veterinary care of their pet.

CFD is in strong support of enforcement of the current penalty laws for cruelty against animals and is a proponent for harsher penalties for those engaged in such abhorrent behavior. The unintended negative consequences of SB 228 outweigh any benefits.

Thank you for your consideration.

Laurie Maulucci,
President

Mabel M. Diamond
Chair, Legislative Committee