

**PA12-108**

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their criteria clearly says that the mechanism for funding must be assured, that it must cover up to a million dollars and it must cover certain types of tanks. And it must cover it for the life of the cleanup of that release. And what -- Senator Bill 375 doesn't do any of that.

What I'm proposing in terms of the phase-out is that -- I recognize that -- that money is always an issue, that there probably needs to be a sunset. From a public policy perspective, there likely needs to be a sunset. I think you guys have to go home and -- and talk to your constituents and you have to be able to say, hey, look, we're going to sunset this program. But it has to be done in an orderly fashion. The tank owners -- it's something that they can live with and it has to be -- take into account the fact that these tanks are going to start coming out again and we're going to find these old pollution problems that were attempted to be dealt with back in the '80s. Or maybe not dealt with at all because we had no cleanup standards, you know, those standards came in in 1997. Tanks were already pulled and installed, we're now at the other end of that 30-year life expectancy.

SENATOR MEYER: Thank you, Mr. Temple, appreciate it.

MARK TEMPLE: You're welcome.

SENATOR MEYER: Our next witness is Cathy Bergstrom followed by Cathy Barber and followed by Unk DaRos.

CATHY BERGSTROM: Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. I'm Cathy Bergstrom, former first selectman from the

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Town of Burlington. I'd like to speak in support of the adoption of House Bill 5446, specifically establishing a threshold for training as a requirement of eligibility to function as a animal control officer in the state of Connecticut.

As a resident of the small town of Burlington, I experience firsthand the ineffectiveness and unprofessionalism of an animal control officer who possesses no real qualifications for the role. I has been incumbent on the residents to police stray domesticated animals and to protect themselves from various wild animals including coyotes, foxes, raccoons, feral cats and bears. One resident reported being instructed by the animal control officer to trap a raccoon, preferably kill it, then call the ACO upon completion of the task for disposal.

Another resident reported that her dog had wandered off property and was apparently collected by the ACO and transported to the shelter. Despite efforts by the resident to contact the ACO, she was not made aware of her dog's location until three days later in the form of a phone message indicating her dog had died while in the care of the ACO. The message instructed her to come to the shelter to retrieve her dog. Upon arrival at the shelter she found the facility closed and her beloved family pet on the ground in a garbage bag.

While inspecting Burlington's shelter with Farmington's animal control officer, I observed two dogs in kennels, one littered with fecal matter. As we exited the facility I encountered out ACO and promptly alerted him to the condition of the dog in the soiled kennel to which he replied I'm aware of it.

Then he exited the facility behind me and secured the door without removing the feces.

During my term as first selectman I elected to not reappoint this individual as it is apparent he is not qualified nor capable of providing the minimum level of service deserved by the animals deserved by the animals and residents. He was subsequently reappointed when I left office. With no eligibility requirements by the state, there is nothing to ensure that professionalism and humane care that everyone should expect.

The incidents of contact between wildlife and humans in the suburbs continues to increase. It is imperative that those we entrust in the role of animal control officer have a skill set sufficient to address this challenge. While I support establishing training requirements for Connecticut's ACOs, I believe the burden of the cost of training should be on the individual seeking the credential not the taxpayers. Thank you.

REP. ROY: (Inaudible).

REP. CHAPIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Is Burlington part of a regional facility or standalone?

CATHY BERGSTROM: No, actually I made attempts to establish a regional facility and was blocked by our labor union.

REP. CHAPIN: Town of Burlington has how many people?

CATHY BERGSTROM: Ninety-three fifty.

REP. CHAPIN: So the ACO was actually a municipal

employee?

CATHY BERGSTROM: Yes, correct.

REP. CHAPIN: Appointed by the first selectman?

CATHY BERGSTROM: Yes.

REP. CHAPIN: And forgive me for not knowing this, does Burlington have a police chief or do they have a resident trooper?

CATHY BERGSTROM: Resident trooper program.

REP. CHAPIN: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. ROY: Any other questions or comments from members of the committee?

Cathy, thank you very much.

CATHY BERGSTROM: Thank you.

REP. ROY: Cathy Barber to be followed by Unk DaRos.

CATHY BARBER: Good afternoon, my name is Cathy Barber. I'm the legislative chair of the Connecticut chapter of the New England Convenience Store Association. We represent over 1,300 convenience stores. Also I now represent Drake Petroleum, supplier of many local, family-owned gas stations. Together we employ Connecticut residents in nearly every town.

We strongly oppose S.B. 375. Family-owned businesses and their customers have overcome oil embargos, odd/even days, government price controls, gas lines, recessions, price spikes

consideration of that, or I do. Thank you.

SENATOR MEYER: Thank you, Ms. Reid.

LAURA REID: Thank you very much, Senator -- or Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR MEYER: Our next witness is Susan Linker. Is Susan here?

Thank you, Ms. Linker for being so patient.

SUSAN LINKER: That's okay. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify.

I'm Susan Linker, representing Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary and Connecticut Votes for animals. I'm here to testify on the act concerning pet shops, 5409 as well as the animal control officer bill, 5446.

First in terms of the pet shop bill, it indeed was our intention to clarify the fact that the -- when animals are -- were purchased from pet shops and they're sick, the law in 2009 that we passed said that consumers have the opportunity to receive reimbursement for medical expenses up to \$500.

There's been some ambiguity in which some pet shops are requiring that the animal be returned in order to receive this refund. And it's been made very clear through -- and attached to my testimony was some clarification -- on the floor back in 2009, both in the House and the Senate, that that was not the intent to require the dog to be returned nor to be eligible for that reimbursement benefit. So our language clears that up.

The other thing that it does is right now the Department of Agriculture, which is a regulatory agency, when they inspect a pet shop and they see problems and animals are sick or are kept in poor condition, the only authority they really have is to revoke or suspend the license, nothing else.

And so we are proposing that if there is a situation where animals are being treated poorly or not well taken care of, that there could be some fines imposed to try to basically put a little bit of teeth in terms of the authority of the animal control officer so they could protect the animals more judiciously. And the other provision is to require that information about this law be made available at the pet shops so that people know what their rights are. So I think it's a very fair law.

I also wanted to mention that the State's Attorney General had an opinion about this. And his opinion was that it's clear that the animal shouldn't be returned in order to receive the refund benefit. But also he says that it should be contemplated liberally in favor of the consumer. So I think that there -- this is a consumer protection bill as much as an animal protection bill. So I hope that you'll consider supporting this.

The other bill is the animal control officer training bill. I think you've heard a lot of compelling testimony and you're going to hear some more later on in the day. These animal control officers who serve our State are put into a variety of situations that are sometimes dangerous. They need to uphold the law, investigate cruelty cases, manage and operate municipal shelters and no training is required.

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I think we've been at this for a while. I really do believe that this year could be the year we have a tremendous amount of support and I encourage you to please support the animal control officer training bill as well.

SENATOR MEYER: Let me go back to the pet shop. I think there may be a mistake in one word in the language.

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Do you have it in front of you?

SUSAN LINKER: I don't have -- well, yes.

The bill or the law?

SENATOR MEYER: The bill.

SUSAN LINKER: Okay. I don't have it in front of me.

SENATOR MEYER: It's line 55.

SUSAN LINKER: May I allow Debora Bresch to respond to that language? Because she has the language in front of her.

SENATOR MEYER: Whatever you'd like.

SUSAN LINKER: She's going to be after me.

SENATOR MEYER: The - what it says here -- and I'm going to throw it out at you anyway -- it says the commissioner -- this goes to the fine, the issue of fines that you asked for -- the commissioner shall fine such commercial kennel pet shops, so forth, not less than \$500.

Generally we don't say that. We say not more than X. This says not less than. This -- that would give the commissioner the right to

presented to industries that are making money at the expense of animals.

SENATOR MEYER: Okay. Any questions?

Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Regarding the ACO training bill, the requirement as of July 1, 2012, that any new hiree would be required to either already have met the certification or within a year meet the certification requirement.

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Presently, is there voluntary certification in place or at least voluntary training in place?

SUSAN LINKER: People can self train if they want. There are some towns that pay for training for the animal control officers, but it's not a requirement. But you can elect to get trained in your own, either individually or through the towns.

I know a lot of animal control officers that are trained and certified and engaging continuing education. I think it really depends on the town.

REP. CHAPIN: So presently there's a universe of individuals out there who have gone through this type of training.

SUSAN LINKER: That is correct.

REP. CHAPIN: And can you tell me if those individuals, when they do receive some sort of certificate of completion -- signed by the commissioner?

SUSAN LINKER: The one training that I'm most

familiar with is the NAACO, the National Association of Animal Control Officers. And I believe there is a certificate that can be presented.

We've had discussions with that, with that particular organization and they're very eager and happy to assist us and provide training here in Connecticut, which is already provided once a year. NAACO is here doing training for animal control officers.

REP. CHAPIN: Right. I guess my concern is the language says that that certificate has got to be signed by the commissioner. And if they're already trained by NAACO, I might assume that that certificate that they already have because they've already completed the training doesn't have the commissioner's signature on it.

SUSAN LINKER: I understand what you're saying. Yeah. I could look into that. I haven't looked at that particular angle of it.

REP. CHAPIN: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. ROY: Thank you.

Any other questions or comments?

Thank you very much, Susan.

Allison Allen followed by Lorin Liesenfelt.

A VOICE: (Inaudible.)

REP. ROY: Oh, excuse me. Debora Bresch will follow and then Lorin. I'm sorry.

Seeing none, Debora, thank you very much.

DEBORA BRESCH: Thank you.

REP. RYAN: Lorin Liesenfelt and she will be followed by Don Tuller.

LORIN LIESENFELT: Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and other members of the committee, my name is Lorin Liesenfelt. I'm president of Dog Days Adoption Events. We're a nonprofit organized in Essex, Connecticut. I'm here today to express our support for two bills, House Bill 5409 and Raised Bill Number 5446.

My organization's mission is to assist small rescue centers and municipal shelters in Connecticut and other states to find homes for their dogs by organizing community dog adoption events. We've been supported by over 500 volunteers from around our state and because of them we've successfully managed five events in our first year.

We strongly support H.B. 5409 in that it establishes a much-needed minimum standard of care for those who profit from the practice of breeding dogs in mills. Growing public anger over this practice and the inhumane care of our companion animals in mills and pet stores should be taken seriously.

I'm also here to support Raised Bill Number 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING. We encourage you to vote in favor of this bill for the following reasons.

Training for animal control officers is

essential to public safety. Animal control officers are required to uphold the mandate to protect public safety and that often involves taking animals into the care of the shelter or pound. Per recent law ACOs are now also required to actively participate in the re-homing of these animals. By posting pictures and descriptions of animals on publically-accessed online forms, re-homing an animal safely and with positive long-lasting results requires knowledge and training outlined in this bill.

Municipal pound animals should be seen by veterinarian. Currently within the shelter or pound environment we allow the public to view and interact with animals who are not vaccinated. The potential for harm to both people and animals is self evident. Animals designated as adoptable by an ACO with proper training and who uses widely established and accepted criteria for assessments should be prepared for potential adoption by seeing a veterinarian for required vaccinations and sterilization.

State vouchers should be redeemed at not-for-profit clinics. In order to assure that excessive costs for medical care will not be passed on to a potential adopter, vouchers should be redeemed at not-for-profit clinics or at veterinarians who agree to accept the voucher as payment in full for administering routine vaccinations and for a spay/neuter surgery.

We heard testimony last week regarding the rigorous and often excessive demands for proper medical treatment required of rescue organizations bringing animals into our state, yet we do not right now require any medical review or procedure for dogs adopted out

through our municipal shelters. This bill will establish a higher standard of humane animal care and control for animals in our state shelter system. Thank you very much.

REP. ROY: Thank you.

Any questions or comments from members of the committee?

Seeing none, Lorin, thank you very much.

LORIN LIESENFELT: Thank you very much.

REP. ROY: Don Tuller followed by Gordon Gibson.

DON TULLER: Representative Roy, Senator Meyer, members of the Environment Committee, my name is Don Tuller. I'm from Tulmeadow Farm in West Simsbury and I'm president of the Connecticut Farm Bureau.

I'm here today to speak on behalf of our members in favor of Raised Bill 5410, AN ACT TRANSFERRING THE CONSERVATION FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I did submit written testimony.

Back when DEP was formed there was kind of -- my understanding is there's a feeling, a need to give them kind of some critical mass. So they moved the conservation functions from the Department of Agriculture over to DEP. And since that time this committee, among other government agencies, have been particularly generous in thinking of all kinds of useful things that DEP should be doing in terms of -- particularly in regulatory areas.

And I would say at this point they have a tremendous number of responsibilities,

effective marketing tool that has been so successful to Atlantic Outboard -- that it allowed them to achieve the number one dealer status for Evinrude Motors in North America the past five years in a row and also kept them elevated to the top ten Hydra-Sports dealer in the country.

I know of no negative effects of this usage. I believe the intent of the -- the original intent --

REP. ROY: Thank you. Thank you. As long as you saw no negative effect, we'll stop you there.

DAN WOOD: Okay.

REP. ROY: Any questions for the captain?

Okay. You've done a great job. Answered all the questions ahead of time. Thank you.

Okay. J Dicine and B. Bentley followed by Christine Lamb.

When you finish, would you report to the desk so we can get your full names for the transcripts?

A VOICE: Yes.

A VOICE: Yes.

REP. ROY: Thank you.

BONNIE R. BENTLEY: Good evening now, Chairs Meyer and Roy and members of the committee. I am Senior Assistant State's Attorney Bonnie Bentley and I'm here on behalf of the division of criminal justice. And I'm here today with Supervisory Assistant State's Attorney Judy Dicine.

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The division of criminal justice strongly supports section 2 of House Bill 5446. This legislation is required to ensure that all animal control officers, known to us as ACOs in the State of Connecticut receive the training they need in order to execute their duties in a manner that is consistent with officer and community safety and with the legal standards necessary to hold offenders accountable in the criminal courts.

ACOs like law enforcement officers must identify, document, seize and preserve the evidence a prosecutor will need in order to prove each and every element of the charge beyond a reasonable doubt. And ACOs like law enforcement officers must also conduct that investigation in accordance with local ordinances and state statutes and the state and federal constitutions.

Animal cruelty, neglect and hoarding cases can be some of the most complex cases that investigators and prosecutors handle. Some of the reasons include that victims cannot testify or give statements, that proving intent requires the gathering and arguing of circumstantial evidence and the list goes on.

What is important to note about this is that more so than in almost any other type of case the ability to prove the case in court depends entirely on the work product of the animal control officer, the investigator in these cases. It is also worthy of note that communities often respond very publicly to these cases resulting in an outpouring of support or criticism of investigators and prosecutors who handle these cases.

Animal control officers should no longer be

thought of as merely dogcatchers. In addition to rounding up roaming animals, which of course they do, they are the front line in the fight against animal hoarding, cruelty and neglect, which sadly are on the rise.

The cruelty and neglect they confront may not be limited to animals. Studies have shown a clear nexus among animal abuse, child abuse and domestic violence. We have cited some of those studies in our written testimony that has also been provided to you.

The recent enactment of Public Act 11-194 recognizes that nexus and recognized that in many instances the ACOs are the first responders in situations where animal abuse, child abuse and domestic abuse are co-occurring.

So presently -- if I may? Presently there is no required standardized training for the ACOs and they are not required to have training before they assume their duties. Some of them may be prior law-enforcement officers or presently law-enforcement officers, however the vast number of ACOs in the State of Connecticut are civilians with no law-enforcement training. And as noted earlier, many of them are seeking out on their own various and sometimes disparate and perhaps even nonapplicable training in order to get something.

I personally have repeatedly stepped away from my prosecutorial duties to train animal control officers, hundreds of them at their annual animal control officer conference, and have provided training to several of the ACOs in the Windham Judicial District, where I work, as have some of my colleagues. We've tried to meet this need and fill the void but

this is -- doesn't even come close to what is envisioned in this bill.

REP. ROY: Okay. We're going to stop there.

And Senator Meyer has a question.

SENATOR MEYER: Terrible. We do have to get some WD-40.

The training program covered by this bill is substantial. It's at least 80 hours. It's going to be expensive. And I noticed that the bill says that the commissioner shall reimburse each person completing a training program for the cost of the program from the animal population control account.

Do you know enough about that account to know that that's going to work, that we have enough money in that account? Or are we going to run into a real financial problem here in this bill and never make it?

BONNIE R. BENTLEY: I am -- well, first of all, I'm not authorized by the division of criminal justice to speak on that. I don't know enough about it. I know some about it and I just, I guess, non-officially don't see a problem with that.

SENATOR MEYER: Okay. Because other witnesses speaking to this program, you know, I think the committee is going to have to know whether or not this is a real thing because if it's going to be at least 88 hours and it's going to be expensive, and the animal population control account doesn't have anything in it, this is not going to work. There's got to be hundreds of ACOs across the state of Connecticut.

I guess this bill is prospective and not retroactive. So existing ACOs won't need to be trained. Will they? Lines 56 and 57 say, no person may begin serving in the position of animal control officer unless trained. So it is prospective, which is helpful, and not retroactive.

BONNIE R. BENTLEY: That is my understanding. I believe that there is the six-hour annual ongoing training that existing animal control officers would have to attend. They would be required prospectively to attend the six-hour in-service training and maintain that.

SENATOR MEYER: This bill says 80 hours.

BONNIE R. BENTLEY: Eighty hours initially is my understanding and then six hours annually.

SENATOR MEYER: And right. Oh, yes. The continuing education of six hours.

BONNIE R. BENTLEY: Yes.

SENATOR MEYER: But I'm worried about the cost of the initial 80 hours.

So is there anybody here from OFA? Nobody?  
Okay.

REP. ROY: We'll check that out as we move on.

Any other questions?

Representative Moukawsher.

REP. MOUKAWSHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm gathering from what you've testified so far, that there's no particular background or training required for an animal control

officer.

BONNIE R. BENTLEY: That's -- that is correct. And what we run into as prosecutors is that we have cases that are very serious facts brought to us that we will often try to work with animal control officers to assist them and guide them in continuing that investigation to gather the evidence that we will need to prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt.

But we have some very serious cases that we end up not being able to prove and not being able to intervene in both the animal and what is now what we recognize as the human suffering that may be going on because we had someone who didn't know enough to look for certain kinds of evidence that we will need to prove the case, or to speak to people and gather the evidence in the ways that will help us prove the case, or to preserve the evidence that we need. And this training -- and there's a lot more to it than just what we would need as prosecutors, but I think it's very important.

And I think my final comments were going to include that in addition to the prevention of the animal and human suffering by training animal control officers in a standardized and mandatory required manner, that these are officers who are out, someone else mentioned, doing very dangerous work, but they also are subject to some of the same liabilities that police officers would be subject to.

And so I think that the investment in their training would be rewarded many times over in the reduction of that potential suffering, but also in the minimization of the risk of liability to the State and to the municipalities where these officers work -- if

they're out there without training unwittingly violating the constitutional rights of accused persons and suspects with whom they're dealing.

REP. MOUKAWSHER: Yeah. I -- well, I was interested in that because, as you mentioned, last year I think it was, we passed a law that I was initially opposed to, which then also required reporting by animal control officers of child abuse.

And now I'm hearing that in, you know, you may say that these people aren't even qualified in any manner to do their job as animal control officers. And now we've, you know, the kind of concerns you have in terms of bringing forth cases of animal abuse, you know, may be even more complicated when you have child abuse cases.

So I have greater concern now. I mean, you know, I kind of acquiesced in it before, but if I had known that they weren't even trained to do their primary job I would never have voted for it.

BONNIE R. BENTLEY: If I may? First of all I don't want to mislead and I don't want this committee to believe that there are none of the animal control officers out their working, doing their jobs; have the qualifications to them. Many of them have worked very hard to acquire training and there are many very motivated animal control officers and who are supported by their municipalities to get this training. Many of them unfortunately are not.

And Attorney Dicine has some statistics on the numbers of the cases that in which there are domestic violence and child abuse issues with co-occurring with animal abuse that

(inaudible).

REP. MOUKAWSHER: I don't want to get back into that debate, but you know, it just -- it concerns me. I was concerned initially that, on the one hand we were asking animal control officers to report, you know, child abuse, if they, you know, if they perceived it, however they may have perceived it.

And then on the other hand we were also required those who, you know, work as -- for DCF to report animal abuse. And I always -- my feeling was that they shouldn't be cross -- crossing into a discipline that they were not trained in.

And it concerns me more now that there isn't any particular training for animal control officers of, you know, that has to do with, first of all, animal abuse, secondly, even gathering of evidence. And you know, it's, you know, I'm -- I just wanted to express that.

BONNIE R. BENTLEY: If I may? Just one thing I am aware of it is that that statute, or Public Act 11-194 does have a filtering system because it all does, I believe, go through the Department of Agriculture. And so there are very well-trained individuals at the Department of Agriculture who are looking at these cases. And they're only the case, I understand, where verified petitions are filed.

And so there's -- it's not left to the individual animal control officer to comply with all of that public act. It's up to the individual animal control officer to have the wherewithal to investigate the case when they go out so that then the appropriate steps can

be taken for those cross notifications.

REP. MOUKAWSHER: All right. Well, thank you. I appreciate your coming forward on this question.

JUDITH DICINE: May I add comment briefly?

REP. ROY: (Inaudible.)

JUDITH DICINE: Oh, I'm not Christine Wright. I'm Judith Dicine from the chief state attorney's office.

REP. ROY: (Inaudible.)

JUDITH DICINE: Thank you, sir. I'll be brief.

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My role as a housing prosecutor, which means that I prosecute the health and safety violations and that leads me to animal hoarding, because of the health and firecode violations affiliated with hoarding behaviors.

Hoarding of animals has been the subject of many seminars in the state of Connecticut lately. There's two this month, which means that the reporting is going up, and that's good. The problem is that the recovery of the animals being reported is not being done correctly in some cases due to a pure lack a training.

When I found out that they don't have training I was frankly shocked. I train your fire marshals for public safety, your building officials. I train public health officials, housing officials and zoning officials. And when the animal control official said, will you help us on animal hoarding?

I said, of course I will. What is your

training currently? And that's when I found out as the housing prosecutor we don't have any. And I said, what about the Kozar case, the case that founded in Connecticut the fact that hoarding of animals can constitute animal cruelty as neglect? And who teaches you about that, which is a wonderful case that Connecticut won in 2008? The answer was again, nobody.

This is an injustice to the people and the animals in Connecticut both. And it's a really hard position for a prosecutor to be put in to win these cases. Nationally the National District Attorney's Association has created a special unit on animal abuse. We're proud to be affiliated with that unit. And we encourage you very sincerely to finally train these officers for their duty.

Thank you.

REP. ROY: Any other questions or comments from members of the committee? Seeing none, ladies, thank you very much. Again, just check with the desk over here for your proper spelling. Thank you.

Jane Matanga Followed by Vanessa Gruden.

JANE MATANGA: Thank you very much for the opportunity to express my support for Raised Bill 5446.

I'm a volunteer and I work for Connecticut Votes for Animals. What I've seen you've just heard here about what these animal control officers face every day. Their jobs have gotten so much more demanding, so much more complex and they have no training. There is no standardized training in Connecticut.

That was the first thing I learned when I got out of corporate and got into the animal advocacy field. I was shocked to find out that there were no standards for animal control officer training, and not only that, but for guidelines and training in place for animal and medical procedures. So what you see is lots of cruelty. You see raging infections for lack of medical training and proper training.

This bill proposes to institute animal control officer training with provisions for annual and continuing education. And it also proposes to allow animal control officers to use animal population control program, APCP vouchers to spay/neuter cats and dogs prior to their release to their adapters.

Fewer cats and dogs reproducing, to the extent that they are with our overpopulation, means less litters, less cruelty and less investigations and lower intake at all our municipalities and towns, and would lower the euthanasia rate. So there's more than what you've just heard. You know, there's a medical cruelty in euthanasia and there's an expense to our overpopulation as well.

As a volunteer I can't express in words what I have seen and, you know, I just feel that this is just so important to have these guidelines for medical sterilization and treatment of animals in our towns and municipalities.

And I thank you for your consideration.

REP. ROY: Thank you.

Any questions or comments from members of the committee? Seeing none, thank you.

JANE MATANGA: Thank you very much.

REP. ROY: Vanessa Gruden followed by Gail Petras.

VANESSA GRUDEN: Good evening. First of all, I'd like to congratulate you. I assume that you guys are in charge of having the 70-degree weather in March. Good job.

REP. ROY: Great job, huh?

VANESSA GRUDEN: Yeah. Keep it up. We'd like to see this next year also, and we'll forget about October.

I'm Vanessa Gruden. I'm here to speak in support of Raised Bill 5446. Lived in Connecticut all my life. For the past 20 years I've been the director of the Ferret Association of Connecticut. We are a statewide nonprofit humane organization that specializes in domestic pet ferrets. We operate a shelter for ferrets. We take in about 75 a year. We also have about 200 members and downers throughout the state.

We're in sort of unique position in that we very much urge animal control, if they are not capable or unwilling or unable to house domestic ferrets, turn them over to us. So we work with them regularly. We work with ACOs throughout the state and probably take anywhere from five to ten animals a year from them. We also provide information that will let them give some -- provide some basic care or adoption if they choose to do that themselves.

Many of these ACOs are wonderful people who go far beyond the confines of bare guidelines to help every animal in need. Others unfortunately seemed to be kind of stuck in

the days back when I was young -- which I won't talk about how long ago that was -- where we had dogcatchers. They worried about dogs. They chased the occasional cow that wandered out of the pasture and that was about all they were empowered to do and that was all they were interested in doing.

These days are way past. You've heard from the people from the Attorney General's office. I can't, you know, emphasize how important what they've have to say is. You know, animal control is now a profession that encompasses cruelty investigations, dealing with very varied species as well as humane education to the public.

We wouldn't want as many people have compared them to police officers. We wouldn't put a police officer out in a patrol car without having passed the academy. We wouldn't want a social worker working with clients who didn't have certification. And we certainly wouldn't want anyone making health decisions about animals without some basic medical knowledge.

ACOs' work now encompasses all of those fields and to me it simply makes sense that they be required to have a certain amount of training so that they can do their job humanely and effectively.

We'd also like to speak briefly about the article where animals adopted from municipal pounds be altered. I've lived in Hartford for 30 years. Every year I have kittens around my neighborhood. Every week I drive by somebody with a bit bull who's got some spare parts that really they could live without. Altering pound animals is not going to solve all of our animal overpopulation problems, but at least it's not contributing to them. Again, this is

something that simply makes sense to us and to our members and to our donors across the state and beyond.

Thank you for your time. If you've got any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

REP. ROY: Thank you. Any questions or comments from members of the committee?

Representative Phil Miller.

REP. P. J. MILLER: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I recall a conversation I had recently with a animal control officer. And the time he had a very rambunctious young male dog that had a very nice personality, but it really needed to be altered to be adoptable.

But he was telling me about the bad situation where he can't authorize that and something to the effect that the people would have to make the commitment to adopt it and then they'd have to go and get a voucher.

VANESSA GRUDEN: Uh-huh.

REP. P. J. MILLER: And would this improve that system?

VANESSA GRUDEN: Let's put it this way, coming from an animal sheltering background where we -- I absolutely do not adopt out any animals that were not altered.

Quite often so many animals are acquired on impulse -- and from the Hartford pound, I think to adopt a dog is \$5. It's not a bad idea to put a couple of barriers up here and there to make people stop and think first, is this really what I want to do? Is this, you

know, am I going to -- is this person going to be a responsible owner and have the animal altered?

You know, if I wanted to adopt out animals to anybody on the street, my shelter would be empty all the time, but we're looking for a quality home. And those animals in shelters deserve a quality home as well as anyone else.

REP. P. J. MILLER: Now I'm -- just a question out of curiosity. I don't know. I'm a naturalist by profession and I've tracked and studied all of the weasels. And I think they're the most fascinating of all the hunters by far.

VANESSA GRUDEN: Yeah.

REP. P. J. MILLER: I don't know ferrets.

VANESSA GRUDEN: No?

REP. P. J. MILLER: But do you ever get a -- I mean, I know what it looks like. There are long and short-tailed weasels and things like that.

VANESSA GRUDEN: Yeah.

REP. P. J. MILLER: And they are the most undeserving of a poor reputation and they're just magnificent hunters. But I don't know much about domestic ferrets. Don you occasionally get an animal that you just cannot adopt out for whatever reason?

VANESSA GRUDEN: No. No. Ferrets are truly domestic. They've been domestic for about as long as a domestic cat. There is no animal that I've taken in -- and at the moment I have a baby who I'm calling Caty the Cayman, because she is sort of a nipper -- that with

proper training cannot be rehabilitated.

We have however occasionally had some ACOs call us about baby ferrets and it turned out to be a mink. They look very similar and there was a fun instance of one trying to carry its babies across the Berlin Turnpike and animal control and the police department stopping traffic in order for this mother to bring her babies across the street to a pond.

When you went there you realized very quickly how smart she was, because where she had raised her babies was a seafood restaurant, that she was bringing them across the street to the pond to teach them how to hunt herself.

A VOICE: (Inaudible.)

VANESSA GRUDEN: You're welcome.

REP. ROY: Senator Meyer.

SENATOR MEYER: Some -- a constituent of mine this week said -- I'm trying to find out if this is true -- said that ferrets are on a list, a Connecticut list of wild animals that we're not allowed to own or possess. They're not. Right?

VANESSA GRUDEN: No. No. They are not.

REP. P. J. MILLER: Are they on any restricted list put out by DEEP?

VANESSA GRUDEN: Not by Connecticut. What's on that list of restricted animals, the language actually says mustelids. But if you read further along, what they're referring to is things like wolverines, which hopefully nobody in their right mind would want to keep. And we actually spoke about that and looked into

that when that law was being proposed and wanted to make sure that it would not include domestic ferrets. But it very specifically speaks to wild animals only.

REP. ROY: Thank you.

Are there any questions or comments?

Thank you very much.

VANESSA GRUDEN: Thank you.

REP. ROY: Gail Petras followed by Barbara Rudnick.

GAIL PETRAS: Hi. Good evening.

REP. ROY: Good evening.

GAIL PETRAS: My name is Gail Petras. I'm an animal control officer for the City of Middletown. I've been an animal control officer for ten years. And thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of Bill 5446, for animal control training.

I recently visited a local middle school to speak to some 6th graders in regards to their career day. The students were surveyed and their overwhelming favorite was animal-related careers. So they asked me to come and talk to them.

When I got there they were chomping at the bit and full of questions for me, telling me how they watch Animal Planet and all of the animal cop shows that are out there. And their big question was, what type of schooling is required to do what you do? So I was a little embarrassed and, you know, a little humiliated to think to myself, gee, kids, there's none required. In Connecticut you just need to

have a driver's license, a high school diploma and a clean criminal history. And there's nothing else that's required of us.

And these kids are looking up at me wanting to be an animal control officer and have a career, not a job. They didn't look at me as if I was a dogcatcher. They saw me as a law enforcement officer, as someone who's helping animals, as someone with a professional career. And it would be nice if everyone could look at us that way.

Our profession has come very far in the last 20 years, but the statutes and the municipalities need to catch up with us. We are not dog wardens any longer. We deal with domestic animals of all types, livestock, wildlife, reptiles, exotic animals. We deal with criminals, with animal abusers, with gang members. We seize animals. We process search-and-seizure warrants and arrest warrants and we testify in court. So how can we be successful at all of that without some level of mandated training?

If we make a mistake and a case gets thrown out of court, or animals die at the hands of some abuser, the public is very quick to criticize us and say that we don't know what we're doing, but we're doing the best that we know how to do. And if we're not taught or required to learn, how can we do better at that?

Police officers go to the police academy for five months and are then required to have mandatory recertification. Imagine being hired as a police officer and being immediately put out on the street with no training whatsoever. It's outrageous to think that that could happen and that's where we

are.

I ask you to please support this bill and to help us officially raise the bar for animal control officers in Connecticut, to help give our profession the respect and the recognition that it deserves.

Thank you.

REP. ROY: Gail, thank you.

Any comment? Questions?

Senator Meyer.

SENATOR MEYER: Do you know if the animal population control account has enough funds to pay for this training.

GAIL PETRAS: I have been told that it does. I don't have that information firsthand, but I have been told that it is.

SENATOR MEYER: Who runs that account? Do you know?

GAIL PETRAS: It falls, I believe, under the Department of Agriculture.

SENATOR MEYER: Uh-huh.

GAIL PETRAS: It's a section of the Department of Agriculture.

SENATOR MEYER: Yeah. Okay. Thanks.

REP. ROY: Thank you.

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon. Are you a sworn officer?

GAIL PETRAS: Yes, I am.

REP. MINER: So as a sworn officer, you've had POST training.

GAIL PETRAS: No, I have not. I am not a sworn police officer. I'm a sworn animal control officer.

REP. MINER: And I'm not sure -- the weapon that you carry is?

GAIL PETRAS: This is a taser. I don't have a side arm.

REP. MINER: Okay. And so is it by some level of certification that you're allowed to carry that?

GAIL PETRAS: Yes, through my police department. The certified me to carry a collapsible baton, pepper spray and a taser and I wear a ballistic vest as well.

REP. MINER: Okay. And if I could, do some municipalities offer training, POST training? I mean, I think the point that you raise is a good point, especially when it comes to search and seizure, presentation before a court and all that, and I suspect that that training only comes through certain certification.

GAIL PETRAS: Right. Right now POST does not offer any animal-control related training. We just had our first class that Judith Dicine, who spoke, taught us just last week. But they don't offer any animal-control related training. It's strictly police academy.

So I have attended the National Animal Control

Association training that the bill speaks to, because my department -- I'm fortunate that my department sent me there. But there are so many officers in Connecticut that their departments say, sorry. We can't afford it. And they find that it's not important enough to send them to.

REP. MINER: And to Senator Meyer's point, there are some municipalities that probably don't think they're at that point yet. Should we consider any separation?

I mean, I understand the point that you make about having it be a career and I believe that in many cases it is a career. In some cases municipalities are able to function, they would probably argue, fine, without having a career animal control officer.

GAIL PETRAS: Well, some do offer part-time animal control officers versus full time, where if it's a small town where they may not have need for a full-time officer. But even if you're out there part time you need to know what you're doing while you're out there, otherwise you're putting your safety at risk and the safety of all the animals that you deal with.

REP. MINER: Okay. Thank you.

REP. ROY: Thank you.

Any other questions or comments? Seeing none, thank you very much.

GAIL PETRAS: Thank you.

REP. ROY: Barbara Rudnick followed by Amy Harrell.

BARBARA RUDNICK: Representative Roy, Senator Meyer, members of the committee, I thank you

HB 5446

for the opportunity to speak in support of  
Raised Bill 5446.

I'm going to speak as a volunteer from both the New Britain and the Berlin shelters. And I have worked with other animal control officers. I'm a member of Connecticut Votes for Animals and I probably worked with animal welfare and rescue for close to 25 years.

As a volunteer, the first thing that I found was that caged animals do not do well. I have worked with kill shelters, unfortunately, which was probably one of the hardest things I've ever done -- and not-kill shelters.

When the animals are caged and possible adopters come in, the problem we have is in areas where they're never exercised or socialized, when people come into adopt them they're basically off the wall. They're jumping. They're not well behaved and therefore a lot of them don't get adopted.

For people like myself that was a major, major concern when I had spent a half-hour with that dog and knew that that dog was very friendly. If he was exercised he would do much better. So that was one of the goals as a volunteer, was to play with them, walk them and to socialize them and to exercise them.

Most animal control officers I've worked with are wonderful, absolutely wonderful, wonderful and God bless them. But there are those that it's just a job and that's just all there is to it. I think most people are appalled at the fact that they are not formally trained. I'll bet if you surveyed most people in this room that were not aware of it they would probably all tell you that, oh, by all means, an animal control officer must be trained.

I have worked in one that is on this side of the street and one that is in the driveway next to it. I won't go into detail, but I will tell you that they are run totally, totally, totally differently.

I have worked in cases where they -- parvo outbreaks were not handled properly. I was allowed to go back-and-forth from the shelter to my own animals, as were the other volunteers. We were not notified that there was a parvo outbreak. The animals were not quarantined. Animals were allowed to come and go. This was a series, serious problem.

We were told we could not use applications when we were trying to adopt out animals by one particular ACO because it was discriminatory. We tried to explain that if you were going to adopt out an animal to a responsible party, that they were certain questions that were important, certain questions.

So basically I would just like to say I'm totally in support of training. It is so very important. And also in working in New Britain I'd say -- and I'm guessing this from the animals that I've worked with -- 85 percent of them are pits. They are not spayed and neutered.

And the question came up -- and don't quote me, but when we were talking about the percentage of animals that are spayed and neutered in leaving some of the shelters, I think it's when they're given a voucher, that it's either 60 or 70 percent are used.

So therefore if Joe Schmoe comes off the street and he wants to breed or fight the pit

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bull in New Britain and he has not been screened, he's not going to spay or neuter that dog. He's going to probably breed the poor female until she can't breed any longer. And six months down the road we're going to see puppies and that same dog back into the cycle. So it is so very important.

Now a lot of responsible animal control officers do spay and neuter before they leave, but in New Britain we did not unless we as volunteers took the animals and paid for and did it ourselves.

So again, animal control officer training is so, so, so important. And spaying and neutering, if we're going to break the cycle and, you know, and so many animals are being euthanized that we've got to do something.

I thank you.

REP. ROY: Thank you.

Any questions or comments from members of the committee?

Well said. Thank you very much.

Amy Harrell and she will be followed by Nicholas Spera, if he's still here. Nick? All right. They're all here. Oh, that's all your class. Right?

NICK SPERA: Right. My students are here.

REP. ROY: Okay. Very good. Go ahead.

AMY HARRELL: Hi. I'm Amy Harrell. I'm a board member of Connecticut Votes for Animals and I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Raised Bill 5446.

I have to admit I share the naivete of Gail's 5th graders in just assuming that there would be some kind of training program required for animal control officers. And in the words that others have used, I was rather appalled to find that they were not trained.

I'm hoping that I can provide some answers to a question that was raised earlier about whether or not there's adequate funding available in the animal control -- animal population control account to cover the costs of animal control officer training.

What we found out is that training per officer from the National Animal Control -- the NACA program costs approximately a thousand dollars per officer. It's not expensive. And what we also know is that the animal population control account has a lot of money in it and, in fact, so much money that it was swept a couple of years ago.

So there's a lot of money and if we have an average of 30 new officers per year, we're only talking about \$30,000. With the danger that ACOs face everyday, the welfare of the animals in their care, the public safety issues that have been mentioned, I think that this is a rather modest price to pay for their training.

And as for the other portion of this bill, I just -- I feel that the costs of pet overpopulation are staggering, but it's not just financial costs. It's countless hours of time and energy for those trying to rescue and find homes for these animals. But also for anyone who loves animals it's emotionally exhausting and overwhelming to face such an enormous and heartbreaking problem everyday.

And I believe that allowing ACOs to spay/neuter animals before releasing them to adopters would go a long way toward alleviating this pet overpopulation problem.

So thank you for this opportunity.

REP. ROY: Thank you.

Any questions? Comments?

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Yeah. I'm the author of this population control program and also the person that changed the name from dog wardens to animal control officers.

And I'm trying to decide whether this is a good idea to raid the fund for this particular cause. And I think it probably is, but I would say this, that I've been trying to get Department of Agriculture to spend more of the fund on actual spay and neuter and not hold so much in reserve, which is how they got their fund raided. You know, it got swept because there was too much money in it. And if they had been spending down continuously and doing additional spay and neuters it wouldn't have gotten swept.

So I think their cushion was a little too big. And when your cushion gets bigger around here it's very tempting for a governor to steal it and put it into another cause. So I would actually rather have the money go to it's intended purpose, which is spay and neuter as many animals as possible.

But this is a small amount of money that you're talking about and it does make sense to

have professional staff out there on the front lines. So I guess I will be okay with this small raid.

AMY HARRELL: Thank you. Yes. As I understand there is a -- there's a very large cushion available.

REP. MUSHINSKY: It's too large. And that, you know, you're asking for trouble if you have a large cushion in a fund. You're asking for someone to steal it and they do.

So all the advocates here that think spay/neuter is important should badger the department to, you know, spent that money when it comes in. Spend it. Don't leave it around because it's too tempting.

REP. ROY: Thank you. Any.

Other questions or comments?

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER: If I come up with a good idea to raid that account do you think I can run it by you, Representative Mushinsky? I can think of a fish ladder in Wallingford.

REP. ROY: Obviously there's no more question (inaudible).

NICHOLAS SPERA: There's no buzzer on this one. Right? Is it the last?

A VOICE: (Inaudible.)

NICHOLAS SPERA: Yes. They will get a good grade for this one.

HB 5447

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**ENVIRONMENT  
PART 8  
2413 – 2739**

**2012**



**Testimony of Debora M. Bresch, Esq.  
 Senior Director, Government Relations, ASPCA  
 President, CT Votes for Animals**

- In Support of **HB 5409** – An Act Concerning Pet Shops and Consumer Reimbursement for Certain Veterinary Expenses and Prohibiting Pet Shops from Selling Dogs and Cats Obtained from Substandard Domestic Animal Mills
- In Support of **HB 5446** – An Act Concerning the Payment Procedure for the Sterilization and Vaccination of Certain Dogs and Cats and Providing for Animal Control Officer Training. Authorizing Bow and Arrow Hunting on Sunday Under Certain Circumstances

Joint Environment Committee  
 March 16, 2012

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and fellow Environment Committee members, thank you for this opportunity to comment on **HB 5409** (AAC Pet Shops and Consumer Reimbursement for Certain Veterinary Expenses and Prohibiting Pet Shops from Selling Dogs and Cats Obtained from Substandard Domestic Animal Mills) and **HB 5446** (AAC the Payment Procedure for the Sterilization and Vaccination of Certain Dogs and Cats and Providing for Animal Control Officer Training). As many of you know, my name is Debora Bresch, and I am an attorney and lobbyist with the Government Relations Department of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), which counts almost 22,000 Connecticut residents among its supporters. I am also President of CT Votes for Animals (CVA).

**HB 5409 (Pet Shops): SUPPORT**

The ASPCA and CT Votes for Animals strongly support proposed bill **HB 5409** - which would clarify Connecticut's "puppy lemon law" and strengthen enforcement efforts vis a vis the state's pet shops - for the following reasons (we also propose some additional amendments below):

Testimony of Debora M. Bresch, Esq.  
 Senior Director, Government Relations, ASPCA  
 President, CT Votes for Animals  
 Re: HB 5409 (pet shops) and HB 5409 (ACO training; ACO access to APCP Vouchers)  
 Joint Environment Committee  
 March 16, 2012

(4) HB 5409 would streamline the penalty imposed on pet shops for failure to adhere to certain licensure requirements (e.g., posting the required breeder/broker information on a dog or cat cage). This provision would, in particular, eliminate the term of imprisonment and clarify that a violation is per animal, making the penalty more usable as an enforcement tool by the Department of Agriculture. By contrast, it can take years under the current penalty provision for a pet shop to have to face a court, and even then, the fine is not even clearly applicable per animal.

- Proposed additional amendment: *Increase the fine for failure to adhere to certain licensure requirements from "not more than one hundred dollars" to "not less than two hundred dollars or more than three hundred dollars." Pet shops operate on a high profit margin per animal. It is critical that any fine for noncompliance not simply become a cost of doing business.*

(5) HB 5409 would seek to prevent pet shops from acquiring dogs or cats from substandard breeding facilities. Neither the ASPCA nor CVA can support the bill's current language (NEW Section 4) - in part out of concerns that the lack of associated standards and any enforcement mechanism might actually result in the opposite of its intended effect, suggesting to the public that a pet shop is not selling puppy mill dogs, when this couldn't be further from the truth. The ASPCA and CVA look forward to working with this committee and other legislative stakeholders to making this language a meaningful reflection of its underlying good intent.

#### HB 5446 (ACO Training; ACO Access to APCP Vouchers): *SUPPORT*

The ASPCA and CT Votes for Animals also strongly support proposed bill HB 5446 which would ensure that animal control officers (ACOs) have the authority to use Animal Population Control Program (APCP) vouchers to spay/neuter cats and dogs prior to release to adopters, as well as finally institute much-needed training requirements for animal control officers.

**ACO access to APCP vouchers would be both humane and financially sound:**

- Currently, only a little more than 2/3 of those who adopt from Connecticut pounds use the APCP spay/neuter vouchers they are required to purchase at adoption for \$45. ACO access to these vouchers - whereby an ACO would use a voucher to sterilize a cat or dog prior to the animal's release to an adopter, in lieu of giving the voucher to that adopter for subsequent use - could result in 100 percent voucher compliance.

Testimony of Debora M. Bresch, Esq.

Senior Director, Government Relations, ASPCA

President, CT Votes for Animals

Re: HB 5409 (pet shops) and HB 5409 (ACO training; ACO access to APCP Vouchers)

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- Fewer cats and dogs reproducing after they have been adopted out means few litters, less cruelty requiring investigation, and lower shelter intake and euthanasia rates.
- Further, it might be easier for ACOs to ensure that APCP vouchers "go" further than they do in the hands of individual adopters. ACOs could make "en masse" transport arrangements with area low-cost spay/neuter clinics, where an APCP voucher would cover the full-cost of a spay/neuter procedure and vaccinations. Alternatively, while the APCP does not limit what veterinarians may charge beyond the face value of a voucher (i.e., \$20 for vaccinations plus sterilization - \$120 - female dog, \$100 - male dog, \$70 - female cat, \$50 - male cat) - a possible cause of voucher non-compliance among pound adopters - ACOs might be able to get some economy of scale from local veterinarians that a single adopter seeking the sterilization of a single animal would not have.

To this end, the terms of proposed bill HB 5446 would:

- (1) allow an ACO to retain an APCP voucher for use by the pound in lieu of giving the voucher to an adopter for use post-adoption;
- (2) authorize a pound representative (e.g., an ACO) to sign and use such voucher on behalf of an adopter;
- (3) authorize a pound to use an APCP voucher without a dog or cat having previously been adopted only if such animal has the medical condition known as pyometra, which is a serious, life-threatening condition;

It is also a priority for the ASPCA and CVA to ensure that Connecticut ACOs are appropriately trained:

- Training and certification help ensure a certain level of competency and preparation among any profession's members. And yet, because Connecticut does not currently require its ACOs to receive training, they may often find themselves in precarious circumstances without the skill set and knowledge necessary to provide for human and animal safety.
- It is also not uncommon to hear of individuals being "demoted" to animal control – demeaning this crucial profession and placing both animals and humans in unnecessary peril when the demoted individual lacks the requisite skills and understanding of animals. The wide range of animal situations with which ACOs must contend each day (e.g., neglect and abuse, abandonment, feral cats, dangerous dogs, among others); the particular vulnerability of animals; and public safety imperatives make training and certification a professional necessity.

Testimony of Debora M. Bresch, Esq.  
Senior Director, Government Relations, ASPCA  
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- The role of ACOs as emergency first responders also makes training critical. Indeed, in 2007, Connecticut passed a law to require the inclusion of the evacuation of pets and service animals in state and local emergency plans of operation, complying with a 2006 federal law (Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards, or PETS) requiring local and state emergency preparedness authorities to include pets and service animals in their disaster plans in order to qualify for grants from FEMA. It is fair neither to animal control officers nor to pet owners nor to animals to expect ACOs to manage crises without prior training.
- Further, at least eight other states, including Maine and New Jersey, have instituted training programs for their ACOs.

To this end, HB 5446 would:

- (1) institute an ACO training program specifically for new ACOs, requiring those hired as of July 1, 2012 either to have already received the prescribed training or to have completed such training by their first anniversary, and
- (2) would require ACOs to receive annual continuing education.

While this is a commendable and necessary start, the ASPCA and CVA would also recommend more comprehensive training for current ACOs, many of whom crave the expertise in their chosen field but do not have the time or resources to obtain such training. In fact, HB 5446 does not speak to funding at all - likely to avoid the danger of unfunded mandates and partly in service to the philosophy that ACOs who care about professionalization will find a way to finance their own training. However, most ACOs are paid far less than professionals in other fields, and so further contemplation of the optimal mechanism for financing of training for both new and current ACOs is also needed.

### In Conclusion

Please:

- Support HB 5409 (pet shops) WITH PROPOSED AMENDMENTS.
- Support HB 5446 (ACO training; ACO access to APCP vouchers).

PTestimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446

Lizanne M. Bennett, President  
Bandit's Place, Inc., Animal Rescue

I would like to thank the Environmental Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446; An Act Concerning the Payment Procedure for the Sterilization and Vaccination of Certain Dogs and Cats and Providing for Animal Control Officer Training.

I am a registered voter in Hartland, Connecticut, and I am the president and founder of Bandit's Place, Inc., Animal Rescue as well as a former animal control officer for the town of Granby, Connecticut.

I would like to address the issues in the Raised Bill individually, if I might.

First, I applaud the State's Animal Population Control Program. In my opinion, it has greatly reduced the issue of over population of dogs and cats and has raised a wonderful awareness among the general public about the *importance* of spaying and neutering. That having been said, I cannot, however, support the State's current position in that we as animal control officers can *euthanize* an animal that has come into our shelter however we cannot spay or neuter it. I was advised at a yearly meeting of animal control officers that the town (any town) "owns" the impounded animal and can euthanize it however the town is not allowed to sterilize it prior to adoption because it does not "own" it to that extent. This made absolutely no sense to me or to any other animal control officer present and it did raise quite a stir. If the State is truly concerned about keeping the stray animal population under control it would only make sense to allow for the sterilization of the animal by the holding town prior to adoption.

I have worked with various shelters across the United States and I believe that in Kentucky there is a law that states that if an unsterilized animal is impounded more than once (and is known to be owned), that animal is sterilized prior to release at the owner's expense. What forethought!

I do know that some veterinary hospitals charge above and beyond what the Animal Population Control vouchers charge for the actual sterilization, so *the new owner is not actually saving any money* and therefore *is not an incentive for the new owner*. The Animal Population Control Program charges \$45.00 for the animal under the voucher program. The town charges \$5.00 for the legalization of the adoption. The participating veterinary hospital can charge their normal fee for the sterilization, minus the \$45.00 the adopter has already spent. This can come to a total of \$200 to \$300 for the new owner *in addition* to what they've just paid the State. If the State allowed animal control officers to put the animals through the program for the \$45.00, the adopter would not have to incur that additional expense and the issue of preventing over population would be more successful.

As to the second part of the Raised Bill, I can only say "Bravo"! After interacting with animal control officers over my span of 18 years on the police department in Granby, I can say, without a doubt, that all animal control officers are NOT created equal. I was extremely fortunate that I had both veterinary and law enforcement background prior to taking the position however at that time the only requirement for the position was a high school diploma. The animal control officer before me was a farmer.

In general, animal control officers are at the bottom of the list for ANY training, etc., however they are, in some towns, allowed to carry weapons. Any training the animal control officer receives is either through on the job experience or working with another animal control officer. I have spoken to several animal control officers through the years and I can say that all of them would be thrilled for a formalized training program.

Animal control officers can be the window to the department they represent. A poorly trained animal control officer can give an extremely negative image of that department and may cost that department the funding it needs come budget time. A poor image put forth by that animal control officer can go a long, long way.

Animal control officers are expected to uphold the laws of the State and are at times required to prepare arrest warrant applications and search warrant applications. Unless that animal control officer is knowledgeable about how to write these documents, they may be refused, allowing a situation such as animal cruelty to continue.

An animal control officer has the power of arrest and hence there is an enormous liability held by the town by which that animal control officer is employed. An untrained or poorly trained animal control officer can put that town at risk simply with the stroke of a pen.

Animal control officers are sometimes allowed to carry weapons. The liability alone on this issue is just dumbfounding if that animal control officer is not trained *regularly* on that weapon.

It is, therefore, imperative that the animal control officer not only receive initial training (Massachusetts, I believe, has an academy for animal control officer training) but for continued training throughout his or her career. I urge you to support this crucial part of the Raised Bill.

I thank you for your time and attention to this testimony. I implore you to support both parts of the Raised Bill as I do feel that they are an extremely important forward step for all towns in Connecticut. Decreasing the liability of towns and municipalities should be first and foremost in the minds of all. Supporting this bill would go a long way towards that end.

Sincerely,

Liz Bennett; President & Founder  
Bandit's Place, Inc., Animal Rescue  
860-653-0558

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Jay Nyczak**

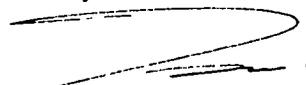
I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING

I am a registered voter in Plainville. My wife and I are members of several animal organizations. We foster dogs rescued by American Lab Rescue and LabsForRescue. Our involvement in animal rescue efforts makes us realize how critical spaying and neutering is in providing humane environment for our animal friends. In addition to obvious reduction in the suffering of homeless animals, sterilization reduces long term costs of animal control efforts. Further, it makes the adoption process less desperate and therefore more selective and careful. A better reputation of animals offered by rescue organizations helps to shift the adoptions away from the commercial pet trade notorious for neglecting the inhumane practices of the industry supplying them with mass bred animals.

Any effort to end these practices brings us closer to the compassionate and civilized society that you and I would like to live in. This is often overlooked in the daily budget struggles faced by the state and local governments but is as important as any effort that makes us better people and citizens.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation

Thank you,



Jay Nyczak  
44 Skyline Drive  
Plainville, CT 06062,  
Phone: 860-793-0185  
E-mail: [jay@redstonemachinery.com](mailto:jay@redstonemachinery.com)

HB5446

To whom it may concern,

I wished to voice my opinion on the legislation presently being heard regarding sterilizing shelter animals before adoption. If one were to take a look at the success rate of the current program a few facts would be evident. The current statute allowing for sterilization after adoption has gone a long way toward reducing the pet overpopulation problem. If you were to look at the statistics though, the number of vouchers issued is far greater than the number of animals being sterilized. This shows a gap in compliance once the animals leave the shelter. If the animals could be sterilized before leaving the shelter then quite easily we would attain a 100% compliance rate further decreasing the number of unwanted litters. This would not change the overall budget of the program since, in theory, these animals would be adopted with a voucher anyways. I feel it is an obvious step toward attaining the goal of reducing shelter populations and unwanted litters.

Sincerely,

Brian Sullivan DVM  
180 Bantam Lake Road

Bantam, CT 06750

Written testimony of  
**Lorin Liesenfelt**  
President

**DOG DAYS ADOPTION EVENTS, INC.**  
101 North Main Street, Essex, CT 06426  
860-767-6840  
[lorin@godogdays.org](mailto:lorin@godogdays.org)

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**  
Friday, March 16, 2012 at 10:30 A.M. in Room 2B  
CT General Assembly

**Raised Bill Number 5446: AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.**

Senator Myer and Representative Roy and other members of your committee, my name is Lorin Liesenfelt, President of Dog Days Adoption Events, Inc., a Non Profit Organization based in Essex, CT. I am here today to express my support of **Raised Bill Number 5446: AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.**

My organization's mission is to assist small rescue centers and municipal shelters in Connecticut and other states, to find homes for their dogs by organizing community dog adoption events. We have been supported by over 500 volunteers from around our state and because of them, have successfully managed five events in our first year of existence. During this time, we have also developed a good working relationship with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture; state rescue centers, municipal pounds and Animal Control Officers.

We encourage you to **vote in favor of this bill** for the following reasons:

**(1) Training for Animal Control Officers is Essential to Public Safety**

Animal Control Officers are required to uphold a mandate to protect public safety and that often involves taking animals into the care of the shelter or pound. Per recent law ACO's are now also required to actively participate in the re-homing of animals in their care by posting pictures and descriptions of animals on a publicly accessed online forum. Re-homing an animal safely and with positive, long lasting results, requires knowledge and training outlined in this bill.

**(2) Municipal Pound Animals Should Seen By a Veterinarian**

Currently within the shelter or pound environment we allow the public to view and interact with animals who are not vaccinated. The potential for harm to both people and animals is self-evident. Animals designated as "adoptable" by an ACO with proper training and who uses widely established and accepted criteria for assessments, should be prepared for potential adoption by seeing a veterinarian for required vaccinations and sterilization.

**(3) State Vouchers Should Be Redeemed at Not for Profit Clinics**

In order to assure that excessive costs for medical care will not be passed on to a potential adopter, vouchers should be redeemed at not-for-profit clinics or at veterinarians who agree to accept the voucher as payment in full for administering routine vaccinations and a spay/neuter surgery.

We heard testimony last week regarding the rigorous and often excessive demands for proper medical treatment required of rescue organizations bringing animals into our state yet we do not require ANY medical review or procedure for dogs adopted out through our municipal shelters. This bill will establish a higher standard of humane animal care and control for animals in our state shelter system.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Jessica Corsaletti, March 16, 2012**  
**New Britain CT Animal Control Volunteer**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the Opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I have been working with animals for over ten years. I worked as a Veterinary Technician and in recent years I've volunteered in New Britain Municipal pound where I've worked directly with pound dogs and people looking to adopt. I am a huge supporter of raised bill 5446! In screening potential adopters of pound dogs, I've met many individuals who come to the pound (with no education on breeding) looking to adopt dogs, especially pit bulls. Because the dogs are often found roaming with no history, this means that the person intending to breed would have no history on the temperament or health conditions of these dogs. These people are what's referred to as "street breeders" They usually take any unfixed dog and look for another unfixed dog to breed them with. I have witnessed them sell the puppies for as little as \$25 to whomever will buy them. Most of the time, the puppies have no vaccines and have not been dewormed. The female dog they used for breeding is often dumped on the streets after she has had her puppies and ends up in animal control. One individual looking to adopt a pit bull once showed me the deplorable conditions where he kept his breeding bitches outside. He stated that he came to New Britain Animal Control looking to adopt because he heard they adopt out unspayed and unneutered dogs and he just wanted to use her for breeding. I explained that he should be very cautious about using a dog with an unknown history, for breeding, but he was not concerned at all. After being a volunteer for a couple years and working very closely with the community and the dogs, I was able to witness many of these puppies dumped once they grew larger and remain unclaimed in animal control. Often times the city ends up euthanizing many dogs because there are so many.

At one point, the Mayor asked me to do research regarding various laws to control the animal population. I researched the effectiveness of such legislation as breed specific laws which target certain breeds and others such as spay and neuter in general. It appeared that laws which targeted specific breeds were not effective for several reasons, not to mention discriminating and unfair to responsible owners. Mandatory spay and neuter however, was very effective. It is irresponsible to assume that an adopter will have their pets spayed and neutered. I was informed by the State Dept. of Agriculture that in New Britain, only 60 percent of the adopters

used the voucher they received, to have their animals altered. That left 40 percent open for repopulating, in a city where pit bulls and chihuahuas are being bred and dumped at an alarming rate.

When approximately 3000 animals are euthanized per year in CT pounds, it is time to take a responsible approach to controlling our animal population. By making sure CT pound animals are spayed and neutered prior to leaving, we can reduce the amount of animals being targeted for street breeding, reduce the amount of animals entering the pounds(long term) and thus hopefully spend less money on euthanasia. Animals would be going to more responsible adopters and not people just looking to make money off of breeding. Spay and Neuter also reduces the animals desire to roam as well as improve temperament and reduce risk of cancers. I completely support raised bill 5446 more than any other bill proposed. It is very important that all municipal pound officers are proactive in reducing the animal overpopulation problem. When puppies and kittens who are only weeks old, are receiving needles in their veins to be put to sleep, there is most definitely a need for this bill to be passed. Its time CT no longer allows street breeders and irresponsible people, to target these helpless animals and use them for breeding and eventually dumping.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Jessica Corsaletti  
22 Mattabassett St  
Berlin, CT

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Elizabeth Marsden**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Chaplin, and I also volunteer for several animal rescue organizations in CT.

I moved here from the Washington DC area several years ago, and was unfamiliar with the CT laws concerning pounds and animals being released for adoption from pounds. (I had worked in animal shelters in the DC area for 30 years). When I found out that dogs and cats were being released from CT pounds without being spayed or neutered first, I couldn't believe it. In DC and the Mid-Atlantic states, it has been normal procedure for pounds and shelters to do pre-adoption neutering and spaying for at least the past ten years. Every progressive leader in the sheltering world recognizes the need for this, and they have come up with solutions to make it happen.

It should go without saying that shelters and pounds exist because there are thousands of unwanted dogs and cats out there, and that spaying and neutering pound pets is necessary so that they don't contribute to even more unwanted pets. Unfortunately, the current CT law handicaps animal control officers so that they are in the frustrating situation of knowing that the pets they are releasing might end up producing more homeless pets in a revolving door syndrome. The ACOs who are trying to do a good job are prevented from doing so by the current law. This makes no sense to me.

The second item I'd like to address is the training of animal control officers. At this time, anyone who signs up for the job can be appointed, with or without any training or background in animal care and control. And remember, protecting people from rabies is one of the duties of this job! I have been appalled at the lack of professionalism I've seen in this state. I've also seen some exemplary ACOs, but they are the ones who have taken the initiative to attend training courses and keep up to date in their field. I honestly have not seen such a lack of municipal support for ACOs anywhere else in the nation, except in the very economically disadvantaged southern states. Training is vitally needed and should be mandatory for a job that includes protecting people from rabies.

I urge you to pass Bill 5446 and to get CT up to speed with these important issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Elizabeth Marsden  
41 N Bedlam Road  
PO Box 332  
Chaplin, CT 06235  
860-949-1712  
qcdogs@yahoo.com

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Paula Fischer, Our Companions Volunteer and Former Board Member**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in West Hartford, CT, and I am an avid volunteer and supporter of Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary. I am also a member for CT Votes for Animals because I believe in animal rights and want to be a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves but deserve love and respect.

I have read and seen on the news too many cases of animal abuse and hoarding (too painful to even describe in detail) which are brought to the attention of animal control officers. In most of these cases, the animals that are found are neglected, sick and in need of immediate medical attention and care. Animal Control Officer training is absolutely necessary and should be mandatory for the proper treatment of our animal friends and is supported by progressive Animal Control Officers throughout the state who greatly want to professionalize the field. The ability to vaccinate and spay/neuter animals before their release from the shelter is also widely supported. It's just plain irresponsible that our animals are being release unsterilized.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,  
Paula Fischer  
18 Hickory Lane  
West Hartford, CT 06107  
Paulafischer62@aol.com

*Testimony in support of HB 5446: An Act Concerning the Payment Procedure for the Sterilization and Vaccination of Certain Dogs and Cats and Providing for Animal Control Officer Training*

Respectfully Submitted by Rosamund Downing, 39 Moss St., Pawcatuck, CT. 06379

Dear Honorable Members of This Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 5446. I am the guardian of four "rescued" rabbits and I am a DEEP wildlife rehabilitator for the State of Connecticut. It is vitally important that Animal Control Officers in our state have the proper training and certification to navigate an increasingly complicated profession. ACOs are not simply the local "dog catcher" of years past. Firstly, they must be familiar with the needs of a multitude of species (ACOs deal with farm animals, rabbits, birds, turtles, in addition to the usual dog and cat "clientele"). I can tell you from personal experience as a wildlife rehabilitator that ACOs must also respond to a variety of calls dealing with sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife – they are often the first person that a citizen will call for such issues. In addition, ACOs must be knowledgeable about state and federal laws, animal cruelty procedures, as well as zoonotic diseases (illnesses passed from animals to humans). They must also have tremendous public relations skills in order to help people - who are often distraught. I find it shocking that ACOs are not required to receive formal training or certification in our state! Even my hairdresser must be certified in order to work in Connecticut. How can this discrepancy be allowed to continue? The recent mishandling of cases by ACOs in Naugatuck, New Britain, and Colchester (regarding animal cruelty issues, the euthanizing of adoptable animals, and the neglect of animals in their custody), is further evidence of the need for formal ACO training.

Please ensure that the uniform worn by local ACOs means something. Please support passage of HB 5446.

Thank you.

Rosamund Downing

39 Moss St.

Pawcatuck, CT 06379

Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446

Jessica Corsaletti, March 16, 2012

New Britain CT Animal Control Volunteer

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the Opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I have been working with animals for over ten years. I worked as a Veterinary Technician and in recent years I've volunteered in New Britain Municipal pound where I've worked directly with pound dogs and people looking to adopt. I am a huge supporter of raised bill 5446! In screening potential adopters of pound dogs, I've met many individuals who come to the pound (with no education on breeding) looking to adopt dogs, especially pit bulls. Because the dogs are often found roaming with no history, this means that the person intending to breed would have no history on the temperament or health conditions of these dogs. These people are what's referred to as "street breeders" They usually take any unfixed dog and look for another unfixed dog to breed them with. I have witnessed them sell the puppies for as little as \$25 to whomever will buy them. Most of the time, the puppies have no vaccines and have not been dewormed. The female dog they used for breeding is often dumped on the streets after she has had her puppies and ends up in animal control. One individual looking to adopt a pit bull once showed me the deplorable conditions where he kept his breeding bitches outside. He stated that he came to New Britain Animal Control looking to adopt because he heard they adopt out unspayed and unneutered dogs and he just wanted to use her for breeding. I explained that he should be very cautious about using a dog with an unknown history, for breeding, but he was not concerned at all. After being a volunteer for a couple years and working very closely with the community and the dogs, I was able to witness many of these puppies dumped once they grew larger and remain unclaimed in animal control. Often times the city ends up euthanizing many dogs because there are so many.

At one point, the Mayor asked me to do research regarding various laws to control the animal population. I researched the effectiveness of such legislation as breed specific laws which target certain breeds and others such as spay and neuter in general. It appeared that laws which targeted specific breeds were not effective for several reasons, not to mention discriminating and unfair to responsible owners. Mandatory spay and neuter however, was very effective. It is irresponsible to assume that an adopter will have their pets spayed and neutered. I was informed by the State Dept of Agriculture that in New Britain, only 60 percent of the adopters used the voucher they received, to have their animals altered. That left 40 percent open for repopulating, in a city where pit bulls and chihuahuas are being bred and dumped at an alarming rate.

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responsible approach to controlling our animal population. By making sure CT pound animals are spayed and neutered prior to leaving, we can reduce the amount of animals being targeted for street breeding, reduce the amount of animals entering the pounds(long term) and thus hopefully spend less money on euthanasia. Animals would be going to more responsible adopters and not people just looking to make money off of breeding. Spay and Neuter also reduces the animals desire to roam as well as improve temperament and reduce risk of cancers. I completely support raised bill 5446 more than any other bill proposed. It is very important that all municipal pound officers are proactive in reducing the animal overpopulation problem. When puppies and kittens who are only weeks old, are receiving needles in their veins to be put to sleep, there is most definitely a need for this bill to be passed. Its time CT no longer allows street breeders and irresponsible people, to target these helpless animals and use them for breeding and eventually dumping.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Jessica Corsaletti  
22 Mattabassett St  
Berlin, CT

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Elizabeth Marsden**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Chaplin, and I also volunteer for several animal rescue organizations in CT.

I moved here from the Washington DC area several years ago, and was unfamiliar with the CT laws concerning pounds and animals being released for adoption from pounds. (I had worked in animal shelters in the DC area for 30 years). When I found out that dogs and cats were being released from CT pounds without being spayed or neutered first, I couldn't believe it. In DC and the Mid-Atlantic states, it has been normal procedure for pounds and shelters to do pre-adoption neutering and spaying for at least the past ten years. Every progressive leader in the sheltering world recognizes the need for this, and they have come up with solutions to make it happen.

It should go without saying that shelters and pounds exist because there are thousands of unwanted dogs and cats out there, and that spaying and neutering pound pets is necessary so that they don't contribute to even more unwanted pets. Unfortunately, the current CT law handicaps animal control officers so that they are in the frustrating situation of knowing that the pets they are releasing might end up producing more homeless pets in a revolving door syndrome. The ACOs who are trying to do a good job are prevented from doing so by the current law. This makes no sense to me.

The second item I'd like to address is the training of animal control officers. At this time, anyone who signs up for the job can be appointed, with or without any training or background in animal care and control. And remember, protecting people from rabies is one of the duties of this job! I have been appalled at the lack of professionalism I've seen in this state. I've also seen some exemplary ACOs, but they are the ones who have taken the initiative to attend training courses and keep up to date in their field. I honestly have not seen such a lack of municipal support for ACOs anywhere else in the nation, except in the very economically disadvantaged southern states. Training is vitally needed and should be mandatory for a job that includes protecting people from rabies.

I urge you to pass Bill 5446 and to get CT up to speed with these important issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Elizabeth Marsden  
41 N Bedlam Road  
PO Box 332  
Chaplin, CT 06235  
860-949-1712  
qcdogs@yahoo.com

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446  
Paula Fischer, Our Companions Volunteer and Former Board Member**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in West Hartford, CT, and I am an avid volunteer and supporter of Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary. I am also a member for CT Votes for Animals because I believe in animal rights and want to be a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves but deserve love and respect.

I have read and seen on the news too many cases of animal abuse and hoarding (too painful to even describe in detail) which are brought to the attention of animal control officers. In most of these cases, the animals that are found are neglected, sick and in need of immediate medical attention and care. Animal Control Officer training is absolutely necessary and should be mandatory for the proper treatment of our animal friends and is supported by progressive Animal Control Officers throughout the state who greatly want to professionalize the field. The ability to vaccinate and spay/neuter animals before their release from the shelter is also widely supported. It's just plain irresponsible that our animals are being release unsterilized.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,  
Paula Fischer  
18 Hickory Lane  
West Hartford, CT 06107  
Paulafischer62@aol.com



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Testimony presented to the Environment Committee of

The Connecticut General Assembly

By the Connecticut Department of Agriculture

March 16, 2012

H.B. 5446 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE  
STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS  
AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture supports the intent of H.B. 5446 with respect to the training of Municipal Animal Control Officers.

Currently there are no mandated basic qualifications or training required for Municipal Animal Control Officers as there are for other public safety personnel. The Department believes that public safety requires that minimum qualifications and minimum training requirements are necessary for these law enforcement officers. Animal Control Officers are faced with a challenging variety of situations, individuals and animals. We believe that this very modest training and qualification requirement is necessary to ensure the safety of animal control officers, reduce potential municipal liability and provide for more uniform and effective enforcement of animal control law.

Connecticut General Statutes Section 22-330 states in part that "any municipal animal control officer in the municipality for which he has been appointed may *arrest any person* and may issue a written complaint and summons in furtherance thereof *for any violation of any law relating to dogs or to any domestic animal in the same manner police officers or constables may exercise in their respective jurisdictions.*" Connecticut law places significant power in the hands of municipal ACO's and consequently, good judgment would indicate that they receive commensurate screening and training.

The job of animal control officer has evolved greatly from the days of the dog warden who only dealt with stray dogs and placed them in the pound. Animal control officers in Connecticut are now required to be prepared to face much more than in the past. Neighborhood disputes, identifying and handling potentially rabid animals, confronting vicious and dangerous animals and pursuing animal cruelty investigations are all to be expected in the course of a day.

It is imperative that today's animal control officer receive proper training. As officers of the Court, it is necessary that these officers be trained in constitutional law other pertinent topics. A municipality that allows untrained law enforcement staff to make arrests and seize property places itself in jeopardy with respect to liability issues.

165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106  
Phone: 860-713-2503 Fax: 860-713-2516  
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STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Within the last year the Department of Agriculture's State Animal Control Division learned of a municipal animal control officer who was called to a complaint involving an emaciated dog. The animal control officer went to investigate and observed a dog in need of medical attention. Because the animal control officer was afraid to act improperly, they did not act in a suitable fashion and as a result the animal did not receive the appropriate level of care it needed. These situations are occurring at an increasing rate. As laws concerning animals are becoming more complex, properly trained staff is becoming more of a necessity.

It is also an appropriate time to move forward and insure that veteran animal control officers receive continuing education and the new generations of animal control officers are the trained professionals that the citizens of Connecticut demand and deserve.

The department has introduced similar language in the past and would welcome working with the proponents of this proposal in an effort to craft a more robust bill that may be easier for municipalities to comply with.

Thank you for consideration of the views of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

March 15, 2012

**Bill No. 5446 (Support)**

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Lauri Buccieri, I was the President of Friends of New Britain Animal Control (FONBAC). Sadly we recently decided to dissolve the organization, after no longer being welcomed at the pound. This took place after going public with severe concerns of the health and safety of the dogs. Over the past 2 years my small group of 5 volunteers have fought the city for the well-being of these poor souls that walk through those doors we call "Hell". Although I would love to address the neglect issues that go on in this facility, the very beginning of these problems starts outside of these walls. It begins with the countless people that are breeding for profit or simply not spaying/neutering due to financial reasons. This, in the long run leads these animals to shelters and pounds throughout the state.

It is a known fact that the New Britain Pound is specifically targeted by people from urban cities such as Hartford, Bridgeport and New Haven. For a mere \$50, this can buy them a new "breeding machine" (normally a Pit Bull) where they will be able to live comfortably from the money on puppy sales...this has been happening for way too long.

Our group has also brought many "backyard breeders" to the attention of the New Britain Animal Control officer for us only to learn that our ACO needed to be educated on the state statutes. Unfortunately, few of the leads were ever pursued by the ACO which led to continuous breeding. As you are aware, the Statutes are a very important part of being in law enforcement and it is very disheartening to have to inform officers on part of their job.

Another issue that comes to mind is the lack of proper protocol that takes place with a Parvo outbreak. These dogs come in with this disease and without a proper quarantine area it spreads like wildfire, killing many in its path such as the unvaccinated that have been sitting in their kennels. During the time of being volunteers at the New Britain Pound, FONBAC needed to contact the DOA on more than a one occasion to inform them that we had a Parvo outbreak. We needed to do this because it had not been originally reported by the ACO because he "did not want to shut down". During one outbreak, we helped bleach the facility from head to toe and couldn't understand why the virus kept coming back. During a brainstorm, between the volunteers and the ACO, we found out that the truck that was being used for transporting dogs was never bleached. We were told that it was "never even thought about". These are all common sense things that apparently need to be reinforced with the people in this position.

I have seen many sad face. Many scared, shaking bodies. Many injured souls, body and mind. Many hairless, skeleton like frames, and many eyes that are begging to be saved....and \*ALL\*

can be prevented. By passing this law, I would like to think that organizations like mine would no longer be needed one day to clean up the daily "messes" made by the irresponsible and the blind. It is so imperative to "help" control the animal population, not "contribute" to the ignorance that we so boldly see every day.

We are their voice.

Respectfully,

Lauri Buccieri  
2 Coolidge St  
New Britain, CT 0652  
860-622-9775

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Angela G. Colantonio**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Wethersfield, who advocates on behalf of animals and encourages legislators to support animal rights initiatives. As an individual who shares a home with many companion animals, I know that caring for another being is a serious responsibility. Unfortunately, many stray animals do not have a home because people do not realize the work involved in properly caring for a companion animal and feel that freeing them into the streets releases them from the burden of caring for another being. However, the stray animal population then becomes an issue for society. The problem is compounded when animals who are not spayed/neutered blamelessly follow their natural instincts to reproduce and have litters, bringing animals into the world that are not guaranteed a home and a loving guardian. Raised Bill 5446 is part of the solution to this problem. It is imperative that we give animal control officers the professional training they need to make informed, humane decisions in the interest of both animals and society at large. Additionally, it is important for animal control officers to be prepared to confront the challenges of their job in a moral and ethical manner. It is not right to allow bright, inquisitive, sentient animals to be brought into this world irresponsibly. As someone who has spent countless hours volunteering for the Connecticut Humane Society, I have seen many unwanted cats, dogs, and litters be dropped off at the shelter through no fault of their own. It is difficult to look into the eyes of an animal who has no home or guardian and who may have been brought into the world simply because an animal was never spayed/neutered. Once an animal comes into this world it is our moral obligation to see that the beings brought into existence as a result of human thoughtlessness and insensitivity are afforded the care and respect every animal deserves. If we are not prepared to take care of these individuals properly we must be prepared to take measures to prevent accidental litters of cats, dogs, and other companion animals. We can be proactive and prevent these sad, unfortunate situations by supporting Raised Bill 5446. We must do what we can to ensure that the number of companion animals in our state does not exceed the amount of time, resources, and care that our citizens have to offer. Raised Bill 5446 is an effective way to prevent the population of stray animals from growing and will allow Connecticut to be a leader in enforcing laws that address this national problem. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and be a voice for the animals. I hope you will strongly support this critical piece of legislation.

For the animals,  
Angela G. Colantonio  
16 Morrison Avenue  
Wethersfield, CT 06109  
[Angela.Colantonio@trincoll.edu](mailto:Angela.Colantonio@trincoll.edu)  
860.817.2626

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in West Haven, and I am an Animal Control Officer within the State of Connecticut.

I have been an Animal Control Officer for over 15 years. Animal Control Officers play many rolls in their communities. My Animal Control is a Division of a Police Department that enforces all State Laws and Town Ordinance related to animals. It is the responsibility of the Animal Control Division to investigate roaming dogs, animal bites, cruelty to animals, barking nuisance, unreasonable tethering or confining of a dog, town defecation ordinance, leash law, valid rabies vaccination, dog licensure and rabies related wildlife complaints that present an eminent danger to the public. It is the goal of my Animal Control Division to educate the public on humane animal care and to place impounded animals into qualified homes.

We have a lot of responsibility and we are responsible for determining outcomes in the lives of animals and human beings. Animal Control Officers have the power to arrest people. Animal Control Officers are not required to be trained in the State of CT. Does this make sense? Not to me.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Rachel Solveira  
15 Laurel Street  
West Haven, CT 06516  
203-231-7990

To. Environment Committee  
Raised Bill 5446

*In Support 2. Section 22-328 of subsections c,d,e,f - Providing for Animal Control Officer Training*

The Connecticut Municipal Animal Control Officers Association supports subsections c,d,e,f, of the proposed Raised Bill 5446 regarding the training of Animal Control Officers. Animal Control Officers have long been overlooked as law enforcement personnel. This is possibly due to the age old vision of the classic "dog catcher", and a misunderstanding of what the true role of an Animal Control Officer has evolved into today. Animal Control Officers not only catch and impound roaming dogs, but they can also rescue injured animals, investigate neglect/cruelty complaints, handle dangerous domestic and wild animals, deal with unpredictable people, implement animal adoption programs, and provide humane education to the public.

According to the National Animal Control Association, an Animal Control Officer is four times more likely to have contact with the public during their work shift than Police Officers. This means that municipal liability can be four times more likely. With Animal Control Officers also having the power of arrest, basic standards in training is not only a good idea, it is a necessity. Municipalities would consider it a potential, legal nightmare to send an untrained Police Officer to do his/her job. The same considerations should be made for Animal Control Officers.

Ensuring that CT Animal Control Officers are adequately trained, certified and required to continue their education, will improve the overall service to the communities that they serve, reduce liability for their municipalities, and finally improve the image of the Animal Control Officer to a respectable profession within the law enforcement field.

Again, the CT Municipal Animal Control Officers Association fully supports subsections c,d,e,f, of Raised Bill 5446. We thank you for your time and consideration regarding this important proposal of training for Animal Control Officers.

*Opposed Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 22-380f - Payment Procedure for the Sterilization of Certain Dogs and Cats*

Section 1. Subsection (a) of Raised Bill 5446, as proposed, creates some realistic concerns for Animal Control Officers and their individual municipalities. The idea is to have the option for the Animal Control Officer to be responsible for completing the spay/neuter of the animal **AFTER** the animal is formally adopted. Although the concept of animals being spayed/neutered, before leaving the facility, is beneficial for curbing animal overpopulation, this proposal raises issues of liability.

If an animal is formally adopted, the voucher is suggested to be signed over to the ACO, and the animal then stays in the custody of the ACO/municipality until the spay/neuter is complete. Because the animal is now legally adopted, the animal, technically, is being boarded at the facility and is no longer impounded. Boarding animals, in a municipal pound, would be in contradiction of the definition of a **Dog Pound (CGS 22-336-13)**. This statute states (a) that a "Dog Pound" "means a building provided and maintained by a city or town which is used for the detention and care of impounded dogs". By the animals now being "boarded" after adoption, this will also accrue costs for the municipality while the animal waits to be altered.

Since there is no legal or law enforcement reason for the impoundment and if the animal now becomes sick or ill, there is no protection for the Animal Control officer or municipality if the owner decides to take legal action for their sick/ill pet.

Also, it is proposed that the ACO is now responsible for the transportation and veterinary visit of someone's legal property (adopted pet). Again, if the now adopted animal is injured or becomes ill during this process, the Animal Control Officer or municipality could become liable for damages to the pet. Veterinarians are free from liabilities when conducting spay/neuter under the Animal Population Program voucher.

It is uncertain who chooses the veterinary place, the adopter or Animal Control Officer. If it is the ACO, and there becomes a problem with the surgery, an adopter may choose not to accept the animal back or hold the municipality/ACO responsible for additional costs. How does the Animal Control Officer go about voiding the adoption and paying for surgical costs done thus far? Ultimately, a good intentioned deed may turn out costly for the Animal Control Officer and their municipality if this proposed option Raised Bill 5446 section 1 subsection (a) is accepted.

The CT Municipal Animal Control Officers Association opposes section 1 subsection (a), of Raised Bill 5446, as written.

Sincerely,

*Karen Jones*

President

CMACOA

*Kaco364@yahoo.com*

Environment Committee

Re: Bill 5446

On behalf of Enfield Animal Control Officers we support raised bill 5446 however, I would like to express concerns with Sec. 2 Subsection (C) of raised bill 5446

This section is only requiring newly hired personnel to be fully trained prior to serving as an animal control officer. I fully support the eighty (80) hours of training however I believe the training should be extended to all Animal Control Officers with less than five years of fulltime activity in the field. There are several municipalities in the State of Connecticut that just hire Animal Control Officers with no prior experience or are unable to train them properly.

I also strongly believe that the State of Connecticut should search within the state for qualified personnel (Current and retired ACO's) to teach the classes instead of using a national company.

Thank you,

David Yoho  
Enfield Animal Control  
Enfield Police Department  
293 Elm St  
Enfield, CT. 06082  
860-763-8944  
dyoho@Enfield.org

Catherine R. Bergstrom

I support the adoption of House Bill 5446, specifically establishing a threshold for training as a requirement of eligibility to function as an Animal Control Officer in the State of Connecticut.

As a resident of the small town of Burlington, I experienced firsthand the ineffectiveness and unprofessionalism of an Animal Control Officer who possesses no real qualifications for the role. It has been incumbent on the residents to police stray domesticated animals and to protect themselves from various wild animals—including coyotes, foxes, raccoons, feral cats, and bears.

One resident reported being instructed by the Animal Control Officer to trap a raccoon, preferably kill it, then call the ACO upon completion of the task for disposal.

Another resident reported that her dog had wandered off property and was apparently collected by the Animal Control Officer and transported to the animal shelter. Despite efforts by the resident to contact the ACO, she was not made aware of her dog's location until three days later in the form of a phone message indicating her dog had died while in the care of the ACO. The message instructed her to come to the shelter to retrieve her dog. Upon arrival at the shelter, she found the facility closed and her beloved family pet on the ground in a garbage bag.

While inspecting Burlington's shelter with Farmington's ACO, I observed two dogs in kennels, one littered with fecal matter. As we exited the facility, I encountered our ACO and promptly alerted him to the condition of the dog in the soiled kennel, to which he replied, "I'm aware of it." Then he exited the facility behind me and secured the door, without removing the feces.

During my term as First Selectman, I elected to not reappoint this individual as it is apparent he is not qualified nor capable of providing the minimum level of service deserved by the animals and residents. He was subsequently reappointed when I left office. With no eligibility requirements, there is nothing to ensure the professionalism and humane care that everyone should expect.

The incidents of contact between wildlife and humans in the suburbs continues to increase. It is imperative that those we entrust in the role of Animal Control Officer have a skill set sufficient to address this challenge.

While I support establishing training requirements for CT's ACOs, I believe the burden of the cost of training should be on the individual seeking the credential, not on the taxpayers.

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5443**  
**PATRICIA A. MCGUINESS**  
**VOLUNTEER, OUR COMPANIONS DOMESTIC ANIMAL SANCTUARY**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the Opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Manchester, CT, and I am on the Board of Directors at Lydall Woods Colonial Village, a pet-friendly condominium complex, as well as a long-time volunteer for Our Companions.

With the passing of Bill 5446, we could all look forward to a new generation of animal control officers. Raised Bill 5446 would allow those who are genuinely interested in the work of animal protection to continue their education through appropriate training and become the professional, competent animal control officers that Connecticut and they themselves can be proud of.

Following are two personal experiences where my intervention may have prevented unnecessary cruelty or euthanasia:

. Walking my dog Max before work one morning, came upon an injured pit bull puppy hiding behind a shrubbery at the entrance to our condominium complex in Marlborough. I found he couldn't walk on his right hind leg, maybe dislocated. I called the local dog warden to see where I might bring the puppy and he said he would come right over and take care of the matter. When he showed up, he had dogs in a closed box in the back of his truck... I could hear them barking and asked him why they were in there... he explained they were his hunting dogs and were accustomed to traveling in that box. I questioned that, and became very concerned about the Pit Bull puppy he was taking from me. I wasn't comfortable now so I told him that I was closely tied to rescue groups and I insisted he get this dog right to an animal clinic for his leg injury and that I wanted him to keep me posted on this puppy. He knew I was going to be on top of this all the way, so he told me where he would be taking the puppy. I followed up with him and the Clinic as soon as I got to work. The Animal Clinic was wonderful and thanked me for rescuing him... his leg was dislocated and they said they would take care of him... and after further follow up, within a week, one of their clients fell in love with him and he ended up with a wonderful family.

. I met a friend for pizza in Berlin and found a disoriented, pathetic looking cat in parking lot, with a hairless tailbone. He just kept walking around meowing to anyone and everyone, seeking help, so I cut my dinner short and scooped him up and drove to a nearby animal clinic. They were just closing and, believe it or not, turned me and the cat down because they were closing and the hospital veterinarian had left. She advised to call the Police Dept since the dog warden could be reached through them. The Police actually made the call for me, but the dog warden did not call me back... it was now getting rather late, here I am out of town, getting really tired and worried about this cat,

so I decided after an hour to drive the cat directly to the Police Dept! They seemed as equally surprised that I showed up with the cat as the fact that he had not returned my call! They made contact with him again and we arranged to meet at the Animal Control Center. I checked out the cat accommodations and advised that I would be following up with him and expected this cat to be taken care of and NOT put down. The next morning, I called and spoke to another Control Officer who said she didn't think the Town would approve spending money on this cat. I insisted she make an effort, and advised her that I worked with rescue groups and that the cat should be evaluated by a veterinarian first. I guess I was persuasive enough... she did get approval from the Town to pay for the veterinarian services. The tail was amputated and the cat was later adopted out through the animal hospital. Happy ending.

My point with above examples is that I am very sure that if I wasn't persistent and personally monitored these situations, both of these animals would have been euthanized. It shouldn't be that way. As a citizen, I expect an Animal Control Officer to handle each situation professionally and with genuine animal protection in mind. Raised Bill 5446 will provide training that will improve the performance and reputation of Connecticut Animal Control Officers. As the Officers themselves grow and become more competent and educated in the handling of these animals, the citizens of our state will be more confident in putting matters in their hands and all parties will be benefit.

There are also many other pieces of this legislation that will be for the good of the Animal Control Officers, the animals in their care and the community.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Patricia A. McGuiness  
252 Deer Run Trail  
Manchester, CT 06042  
Ph: 860-643-0050

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**LORRAINE F. COSTANZO**  
**ANDOVER, CT 06232**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the Opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Andover CT and this is only one example of why I feel more is needed .

A personal example of how I see how more support for Raised Bill 5446 is:

- *Ferrell cats in the neighborhood who we sometimes cannot help and, when we are able to catch them, it ends up that one person sometimes takes on the financial responsibility of having these animals neutered and vaccinated before release. This is too much for anyone, which dissuades folks from giving this problem their best attempt.*

I personally had two feral cats that I could not trap, but all I could do was keep them alive by feeding them during the tragically cold days/nights. I did eventually hear that they came to a bad end. We have been lucky that this winter was kinder.

I think it should not be incumbent only upon individuals, but that Animal Control Officers be enabled/funded to help with this effort.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Lorraine Fox Costanzo  
36 Pine Ridge Drive  
Andover, CT 062342-1029  
860.742.0490  
LorraineCostanzo@aol.com

Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446  
Susan B. Linker, March 16, 2012  
CEO, Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary  
Vice President, CT Votes for Animals.

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill 5446- AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING

Many of you have probably been aware of the stories of neglect, apathy and incompetence that have been in the news surrounding the operations of some municipal shelters and the Animal Control Officers who run them.

Increasingly there have been publicly known cases of dying and injured animals languishing in kennel runs denied urgent veterinary care, an Animal Control Officer's inability to properly handle dogs, which encouraged aggressive behavior and when a kennel latch failed, two dogs engaged in a deadly fight, and simply refusing to adopt out dogs, which one animal control officer publicly stated in a local newspaper was "a waste of time and effort".

In Connecticut, unlike many states, we have allowed a system under which people are hired to uphold the important tasks of enforcing animal protection laws and ensuring public safety, yet CT does not require any training. The catastrophic result of this we have seen over and over again.

And it's not just the animals and our citizens who have been left unprotected as a result. It's also the Animal Control Officers who often find themselves in dangerous situations with no training to call upon. This also has concerned and outraged many professional and caring individuals in the Animal Control field, who recognize the great need for training and who will join me in support of this important piece of legislation.

This bill will require much-needed training, thereby creating a new generation of animal control officers who are professional, competent and genuinely interested in the work of animal protection and public safety. This bill will further require continuing education for every Animal Control Officer in our State.

Raised bill 5446 will also provide a much-needed procedure that will allow Animal Control Officers to redeem the Animal Population Control Program's Spay/Neuter voucher, before the release of the animal from the shelter. This will enable conscientious Animal Control Officers to make sure that adopted animals leave the pound vaccinated for rabies and sterilized so they are not a public safety threat and so more unwanted animals are not born.

It may come as a surprise, and perhaps a shock, that these issues of training and pre-adoption sterilization have not been addressed. But this year we have the support of many Animal Control Officers, prosecutors and municipal officials and countless citizens who want to improve the performance and reputation of Connecticut Animal Control Officers for the good of the Animal Control Officers themselves, the community and, of course, animals in their care.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,



Susan B. Linker  
Bloomfield, CT 06002

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5443**  
**Susan L. Wallace PhD**  
**Cherry Brook Kennels LLC**

I am writing to support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Canton, CT and an owner of a dog boarding kennel. My business, Cherry Brook Kennels LLC, is the designated shelter for the Town of Farmington, CT.

Each year the Town of Farmington delivers approximately 150-200 cats, dogs, and miscellaneous domestic pets to our facility. About half of these pets are returned to their owners within 48 hours. Unfortunately, the other half of the dogs and most of the cats are not claimed and are put up for adoption. The vast majority of the unclaimed pets have not been spayed or neutered. With the exception of dogs from the bully breeds, most friendly, altered dogs are adopted quickly. Pets that are not spayed and neutered are harder to place. All adopters are required to purchase the State Voucher, but we do not know how many of the pets sent with vouchers are altered after leaving our facility.

Conservative estimates indicate that the number of descendants produced by an unsprayed female cat allowed to roam outside is between 100 to 400 cats. This assumes that only 25% of the female offspring survive.

Early in my ownership I adopted out a female cat with a voucher. The owner failed to have the cat spayed and a litter of kittens were born. She gave away these kittens and there is no way to know how many additional cats were produced.

In the past few years I have taken to "adopting" cats and dogs myself for the sole purpose of having them spayed and neutered. There are two advantages to this tactic:

1. I can be absolutely sure that the cat or dog has been altered.
2. People seem to prefer dogs that are already "fixed."

Pets that are already spayed and neutered find homes more quickly.

In my town of Canton, there is a significant feral cat population near Secret Lake. To my knowledge, no attempt has been made to catch, alter, and release these cats to prevent further reproduction. This colony presents a danger to the residents in the neighborhood. A few years ago a child and the ACO in Simsbury, CT were attacked by a rabid feral cat. The Secret Lake cat population is susceptible to rabies and other diseases and is another tragedy waiting to happen. There are probably many more colonies in the state that are similar to the Secret Lake colony.

Every female cat or dog that is spayed prevents a significant number of unwanted cats or dogs

from being born. Giving the ACO the authority to alter the pets prior to adoption is the only way to guarantee that a cat or dog adopted from a Connecticut municipality is spayed or neutered. I have not seen any statistics on how many of the State Vouchers are actually redeemed. With the current voucher system, follow-up with adopters to make sure that the pets are spayed or neutered is essential to the success of the program.

This piece of legislature is important to the citizens, towns, and the state of CT. Controlling the expanding population of unwanted animals is expensive and emotionally draining. This bill could make a significant dent in the number of unwanted pets in our state.

Thank you,

Susan L. Wallace PhD  
CHERRY BROOK KENNELS LLC  
490 Cherry Brook Road  
Canton, CT 06019  
860-693-4658

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446****Doreen Brown****Volunteer with Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the Opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Ashford, and I am a volunteer with Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary.

I strongly support Raised Bill 5446. There are too many abandoned and unwanted animals in our Connecticut towns and as animals flow through animal control facilities, it's a disgrace that animals are not well cared for and a huge disappointment that the animals are not sterilized before adoption. While Bill 5443 can have a financial impact on the front end, it would benefit officers with proper training for their jobs as well as reduce the cost of sheltering & euthanasia with fewer animals being born and finding their way back to shelters. Education is imperative and especially when it comes to public safety. Police officers, EMT, Fire personnel are all trained for their positions and Animal Control Officers should be no different. The results of education and the control to vaccinate and spay/neuter could only be positive both for the municipality as well as the community it serves. Spay/Neuter before releasing for adoption from any facility, will eliminate additional unwanted pets that only fill animal control facilities and rescue facilities.

It's imperative that Raised Bill 5446 be passed. Education and training of Animal Control Officers and professionalizing this position would be hugely beneficial. It would empower this position and attract people with a true desire for animal wellness and public safety. It would provide a positive example to the people of the community that this is not only a vital position but worthy of investment. Lead by example. Let the Towns and Animal Control Officers lead by this positive example and let these Officers be trained to perform their jobs well and safely serve the community they work for.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Doreen Brown  
Ashford, CT 06278

**Environment Committee 3/16/12- Testimony for Raised Bill HB 5446- *An Act concerning the payment procedure for the sterilization and vaccination of certain dogs and cats and providing for Animal Control Officer training***

By Karen Laski, Manchester CT., Board member of CT Votes for Animals

For many years I have witnessed the suffering of animals because they were not sterilized. Animals are often given up or abandoned after they give birth or are still pregnant. I am still plagued by the memory of a family leaving their terrified beagle at the humane society. She had recently given birth and they didn't want to deal with the inconvenience. Another incident that haunts me was a man who threw a pit bull out of his car in the middle of Hartford because her breeding days were over. She had to be euthanized after it took several days to catch her. HB-5446 would put a huge dent in this problem. I also totally support the training for Animal Control Officers.

Thank you,  
Karen Laski  
279 Fern St.  
Manchester, CT 06040

RAISED BILL 5446

To provide funds for the training of Animal Control Officers to sterilize and vaccinate certain dogs and cats.

A petition from Gretchen W. La Bau  
67 Duncaster Road  
Bloom field, Ct 06002

I am a registered voter in Bloomfield, a Board Member and volunteer for Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary in Bloomfield and a member of Connecticut Votes for Animals.

I am deeply concerned about the welfare of animals in Connecticut and am aware of the need for dogs and cats to have proper medical care and to be sterilized and vaccinated in the shelter before being released. Too many people do not follow through on these measures on their own and it is vital that all animals have this protection. If Animal Control Officers could perform these procedures, it would cut down on the overpopulation of dogs and cats and give them a healthier life. Through my involvement with these organizations, I can see that there is a desperate need for this bill to be acted on.

Thank you for your support of this important piece of legislation.

*Gretchen W. LaBau*

Gretchen W. LaBau

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Mary deManbey**  
**Our Companions Animal Sanctuary**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in **Manchester**, and I am a volunteer for Our Companions Animal Sanctuary. I have seen firsthand the suffering of feral cats in my neighborhood, and I am firmly convinced that this bill will help deflate the growing numbers of feral cats living under horrendous conditions.

A few summers ago, I had eight cats dropped off in my backyard, one of them whom was pregnant. I found them delving into my garbage cans, looking half-starved. Although I called my town's animal control officer, I was informed that there was nothing they could do, and that I was now the owner of these cats. Fortunately, after much effort (both financially and physically) I was able to find homes for all of them with the exception of one. I named him Timmy and was able to feed him through one of the coldest winters we have ever had. He disappeared shortly thereafter. I can only assume that he never survived.

I was fortunate in that I was connected to the animal rescue movement, and I had enough funds to assure that they were all spayed and neutered. But how many of us do? And how many are willing to look the other way and just assume that these strays will survive? Most don't survive beyond 2-3 years, either because of exposure to harsh weather, attacks from wild animals or because they have virtually starved to death.

With the adoption of this law, requiring higher standards for animal control officers and training in sterilization methods, the average person facing this heartbreaking problem will have more needed support – particularly when it comes to sterilization, which in the long run will reduce the feral cat population. It's sorely needed. Those of us who care so deeply for these beautiful creatures just can't keep up with this growing population.

As our legislators, your obligation is to care for your people. If you care about the people in your district, you will also care about the animals who are part of your people's families – and even those who simply live among us with no where to go. Just as we would expect humans to be treated with respect, animals deserve the same kind of treatment. Animal control officers are on the front line of animal rescue welfare. Attention must be paid. When done right, what a better, more humane world we leave.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation. Thank you.

Mary deManbey  
125 North Elm Street  
Manchester, CT 06042  
(860) 646-3611  
[marydemanbey@yahoo.com](mailto:marydemanbey@yahoo.com)

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Caroline K. Gaetano**  
**Volunteer, Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary**  
**Member, CT Votes for Animals**  
**Member, Tails of Joy, Inc.**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the Opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in West Hartford, and until our program was temporarily placed on hold, was a manager of the CTSafePet program with Our Companions.

In Connecticut, unlike many states, we have allowed a system under which people are hired to uphold the important tasks of enforcing animal protection laws and ensuring public safety, yet CT does not require any training. The catastrophic result of this we have seen over and over again.

And it's not just the animals and our citizens who have been left unprotected as a result. It's also the Animal Control Officers who often find themselves in dangerous situations with no training to call upon. This also has concerned and outraged many professional and caring individuals in the Animal Control field, who recognize the great need for training and who support this important piece of legislation.

This bill will require much-needed training, thereby creating a new generation of animal control officers who are professional, competent and genuinely interested in the work of animal protection and public safety. This bill will further require continuing education for every Animal Control Officer in CT. Furthermore, this bill aligns well with the Cross-Reporting of Child Abuse and Animal Cruelty legislation that the Governor signed into law last year. Animal Control Officers are often the first responders to animal abuse reports and then have access inside the home and need to be trained to look for signs of child or domestic abuse. This training would be welcome news to someone who has spent considerable time and energy advocating for pets of families in crisis!

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Caroline K. Gaetano  
89 LeMay Street  
West Hartford, CT 06107

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5443**  
**DeeDee Czelazewicz**  
**VOLUNTEER, OUR COMPANIONS DOMESTIC ANIMAL SANCTUARY**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the Opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I'm writing to testify that animal control officers should be trained in the state of Connecticut to vaccinate and spay and neuter animals before they are released from any shelters in this state. It's an outrage that animals are being released without vaccines & unsterilized. I am in full support of the legislation for bill 5446 to be passed thank you

DeeDee Czelazewicz  
176B Brewer Street  
East Hartford, CT 06108

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5443**  
**Deidre A. McGlynn**  
**Volunteer for Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the Opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Columbia, CT, and I am a volunteer for Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary.

As you already are aware, there have been too many tear worthy articles in the news indicating abuse, sheer neglect, lack of medical care and basic incompetence towards animals involving a number of Connecticut's Animal Control Officers. These incidents clearly imply over and over that there is little regulation of these people in these positions and they lack any formal training necessary to handle these animals in a way that is merely humane. In the state of Connecticut it is illegal to abuse or neglect a pet and this is going on right in our own municipalities! Colchester, Naugatuck and New Britain are just a few towns that have had recent investigations of ACO abuse. We need to get back to basics and educate these people who are paid to do a job ~ correctly and ideally with compassion.

Raised bill 5443 will supply the much needed infrastructure our municipalities need to give hope that these animals will receive more humane treatment Animal Control Officer training is the solution and a solution supported by progressive Animal Control Officers throughout the state who greatly want to professionalize the field. The ability to vaccinate and spay/neuter animals before their release from the shelter is a fundamental start and it's an outrage that our animal are being release unsterilized. These ACO positions should not be maintained by old school dog catchers. We need a new breed of ACO's and Raised Bill 5443 will allow us to start weeding out the dog catchers and weeding in ACO's that want do this job for the right reasons.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Deidre A. McGlynn  
PO Box 1444  
Hebron, CT 06248  
860-228-0111

Testimony in Support of Raised Bill 5446  
Valerie Friedman, March 16, 2012  
Board Chair, Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary

I appreciate the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

In an enlightened state like CT, it is distressing that the rules by which municipal pounds and the animal control officers (ACOs) responsible for the pounds operate is so backward. Animal lovers throughout the State of CT are shocked and distressed to learn that animals are released from municipal pounds without being spayed or neutered and without basic vaccinations. This only exacerbates the problem of too many unwanted and abandoned animals, who fill the pounds and have to be put to untimely deaths. The goal needs to be a requirement that all animals released from CT pounds are "fixed" before being released. But until we make that happen (and it cannot happen soon enough), Raised Bill 5446 serves as a significant stopgap, giving ACOs the authority to redeem the State's spay/neuter voucher and have an animal fixed before adoption and vaccinated for rabies. This will accomplish two critical goals, preventing more unwanted animals from being born and protecting public health.

Equally important is the requirement that ACOs undergo basic mandatory training, so they serve the public and the animals in their care with professionalism. This training would give ACOs the tools they need to prevent injury to themselves, as well as to others. There have been numerous examples of ACOs causing damage to themselves and others due to inappropriate behavior, which results in embarrassing public relations problems.

This bill is supported by many Animal Control Officers, municipal officials, and the public, who want to see improvements that enable CT to become a role model in animal welfare for the rest of the country.

Thank you for giving this important subject the attention it deserves.

Yours truly,

Valerie Friedman  
Washington, CT

5446Mar2012

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Jennifer L. Kelsey**  
**Epidemiologist**  
**Volunteer, Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary,**  
**Volunteer, Yankee Golden Retriever Rescue**

I am delighted to hear that the Environment Committee is considering Raised Bill 5446, An Act Concerning the Payment Procedure for the Sterilization and Vaccination of Certain Dogs and Cats and Providing for Animal Control Officer Training.

I am a registered voter in Clinton, and perform a variety of volunteer tasks in Connecticut for Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary and Yankee Golden Retriever Rescue. As an epidemiologist, I have donated time to assisting veterinarians with research concerned with the health and welfare of companion animals.

Proper care and placement of dogs and cats is of the utmost importance to both the animals themselves and the population as a whole. Nationwide over half of households own either a dog or a cat. About 39% of households own at least one dog and 33% at least one cat. Among owned dogs and cats, 21% were adopted from animal shelters. Thus, dog and cats are an important part of the lives of many citizens, and animal shelters are a significant source of these companion animals.

Frankly, I was shocked to learn that in Connecticut, no training is required for the complex job of Animal Control Officer, but now I understand why the quality of animal shelters in the state shows such tremendous variation. I have no specific data on the percentage of animals that are mistreated or inadequately cared for in Connecticut shelters, but I am sure you have heard many horror stories about the inhumane treatment of animals in some shelters. This situation could be greatly improved by proper selection and training of all Animal Control Officers. The inhumane treatment is obviously not fair to the animals themselves, but also can greatly affect the lives of the people who adopt them, the Animal Control Officers themselves, and society as a whole. Pre-adoption sterilization and vaccination are also important components of a good animal control and protection program.

In my view, passage of Raised Bill 5446 is a no-brainer in a civilized society, and I strongly encourage you to vote for its passage

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Jennifer L. Kelsey  
25 Tower Hill Road  
Clinton CT 06413  
jennykelsey@comcast.net

## Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5443

Jane T. Hotchkiss  
1 Tower Hill Road  
Clinton, CT 06413

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the Opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Clinton, CT, and I have adopted several cats from shelters/rescue organizations. It is very important to me that these animals have been well treated, are sterilized, are in the best possible health, have not been exposed to contagious diseases and are well socialized. I have had concerns about adopting from shelters because of these things. I think that this might give more people the confidence to adopt from a shelter or animal rescue organization.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation

Thank you,

Jane T. Hotchkiss

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5443**

Gina M. Hoag, March 16, 2012  
 158 Paddock Avenue, Condo 1302  
 Meriden 06450  
 gmh3972@aol.com

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the Opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Meriden, a volunteer and supporter of Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary and a member of Connecticut Votes for Animals

This bill brings into focus the critical need for specific and measured training for Animal Control officers in every municipality in Connecticut. These animal control officers, often political appointees, some locally elected and often hired after other means of employment has ended or retirement are often ill prepared for the life and death decisions of their responsibilities

It is unconscionable that any person who holds "life" decisions within the framework of occupational responsibilities does not have a credential certifying that they are trained in the medical, ethical and legal context of animal welfare, care and home placement

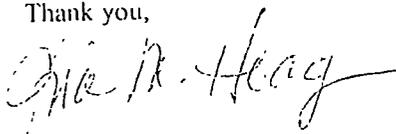
The National Animal Control Association (NACA) offers this type of training that is generally accepted across the United States, resulting in certification as an Animal Control Officer. However, CONNECTICUT does not require training for animal control officers or dog control officers.

Although NACA training is generally accepted across the United States, NACA certification is not specific to any state (although some states and agencies require NACA certification). Your state and/or the agency to which you are employed may require additional certifications or training per their own requirements. Since NACA courses are held across the United States, NACA courses do not address specific state laws and/or requirements. You should not assume that if you attend a NACA program that our training will fulfill all of your state's requirements. You may need additional training at the state level in order to comply with your own state's law. NACA does not promote any program as certification specific to any state

We live in an era where pets, specifically dogs and cats, are being abandoned in vacated homes and apartments as occupants are unable to pay rents and mortgages. These animals are left to starve and/or die and within a few days of abandonment assume a demeanor of scared and desperate with no food or water. To approach such an animal requires more than a control noose and a weapon. To meet that former pet's emotional needs, most important at that moment of discovery or first meeting in that abandoned building or unit, requires special training, not the characteristic quick decision-making of a police officer. These pets did not break a law, they were summarily discarded

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation

Thank you,



Gina M. Hoag

I am a CT resident, 151 Hamburg Road, Box 765, Lyme, CT , and I am 100% in support of Raised Bill 5446 Far too many cats and dogs released for adoption from town shelters, or returned to their owners are NOT sterilized resulting in feral cat colonies, and unwanted puppies

Animal Control Officers are often lacking in full understanding of the CT laws and regulations regarding animals, and they do not have the professionalism that their important duties command. CT should be a leader in the humane treatment of animals and the ACO's should be in the forefront of this effort. Only thru training can this be accomplished

Hercy Lord, Lyme, CT

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446****Jenine Moscové**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING

I am a registered voter in Avon, Connecticut. I love animals and care about their welfare. In my life I have rescued countless abandoned animals. I have also spent a lot time and money trapping, neutering/spaying, vaccinating and releasing feral cats. If more animals were spayed and neutered, less of them would be abandoned and have to suffer. The shameful thing is that Connecticut, the richest per capita state in the United States, does not even have a low cost spay and neuter clinic. I received help from a privately funded animal welfare organization and had to drive to Massachusetts to a low cost clinic (an excellent facility in Springfield) in order to be able to afford to have all the cats spayed, neutered and vaccinated. Any bill that would enable for more animals to be sterilized and vaccinated would be a tremendous step forward in animal welfare.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Jenine Moscové  
83 Secret Lake Road  
Avon CT 06001  
jtmoscove@yahoo.com

Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446

**Kathryn Coyle**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Avon, and I am a local business owner.

We have created an environment in which animals have become a nuisance and are neglected. It's our duty to help control animal populations especially of feral cats through spay and release programs.

There was a community of feral cats that live near our office. A mother cat and her kittens made their home behind some bushes on our businesses back patio. We tried to call animal control or other organizations to help us trap and spay this mother and her kittens. This same mother cat had 3 litters of kittens in a year and a half and no one was able to help us spay this rapidly growing community of cats. This large feral cat population attracted much larger prey to the area. Needless to say, we need to help encourage wild animals to be able to remain in the wild and be responsible to help control populations of 'domestic species' that are living in the wild because at some point they have or their parents were abandoned by a human being.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Kathryn Coyle

17 W Main ST

Avon, CT

06001

Bill 5446 would help ensure the well-being of animals at various stages of their interaction with animal control officers. The requirement that ACOs receive substantial training and ongoing education in caring for animals is a significant contribution toward preventing tragedies like that in Naugatuck.

I strongly encourage you to pass this bill, which can improve the well-being of Connecticut's sheltered, homeless, and otherwise needy animals.

Thank you

Daryn David, Ph D.

73 Hawthorne Avenue

Hamden, CT 06517



Mandy Wieting  
64 Valley Falls Road  
Vernon CT 06066

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5443 • March 15, 2012**  
**Graphic Designer for Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the Opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Vernon, and I am a Graphic Designer for Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary.

I have loved animals even since I can remember. Growing up, my family always took in the stray cats of the neighborhood, there always seemed to be many. In fact, my first best friend was a Siamese named Sultan. As I grew up, I quickly learned that not everyone shared my deep love of animals, which made me want to fight for them. I was so happy to stumble upon this amazing organization, Our Companions, who stood for everything I believed in.

I first started volunteering for Our Companions about five years ago by designing the flyers for pets looking for a home. I remember the first time I sat at my computer to start the first batch of flyers. I was staggered by the sheer number of pets looking for a home, and as I read their stories, I began to cry.

Five years later, there is still a constant stream of animals looking for a home. This needs to stop. The animals need to be sterilized before they get into the public's hands. If the animal control officers had been able to sterilize these animals, I believe there would be far fewer posters for me to design.

Education is key. By training the animal control offers and educating both them and the public, we can gradually reduce the huge number of homeless animals.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Mandy Wieting  
64 Valley Falls Road  
Vernon, CT 06066

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**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**

Kathleen Sullivan

Board Member CT. Votes for Animals, Our Companions

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Bloomfield, and I am a member of the Board of Trustees of CT. Votes for Animals and Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary.

I was astounded to learn that ACOs are expected to do their job with no formal training. In many cases the work puts both animals and humans in dangerous situations. An ACO should have a basic skill set that would allow them to do the job safely and humanely for all parties involved. This bill will help with that tremendously. Also, I expect that the training process will help to screen out the type of callous individuals we have read about in the papers in recent months that accept ACO positions because they require no skills, and are largely unsupervised, not because they care in the slightest about the animals the job charges them with protecting.

Until our recent move to Bloomfield, I lived on Bloomfield Avenue in Hartford for 16 years. I had a number of encounters with Animal Control Officers while living there because dogs were abandoned in our neighborhood from time to time. We also had an active wildlife population since we lived in proximity to the wetlands surrounding the Park River and the acreage belonging to the Hartford Golf Club. One incident in particular comes to mind.

One morning in 2008 at 11a m a coyote was hit crossing the street in front of my house. The car that hit it never stopped. I could see that the animal was severely, probably fatally hurt, but was still alive and suffering mightily. I called the City of Hartford Animal Control and to my great relief an ACO responded within a short period of time. Luckily, she clearly had experience with such incidents and handled the situation in a professional manner. She dressed in protective garments and gloves and handled the coyote carefully and humanely. She wrapped the animal in a heavy blanket or tarp to protect both of them, and carried him to the van where she gently placed him, all the while keeping myself and the other person at the scene well away. She assured us that she would take the animal directly to the vet to be euthanized and end the pain. She observed that he had a terrible injury and was also likely sick or rabid as he was roaming at midday.

What if a less experienced individual had been on call that morning and been bitten by a possibly rabid wild animal in the process of removing him from a very busy street because they had no idea how to approach an accident victim? "Safety first" is the mantra in many workplaces, why not this one?

On behalf of residents and animals throughout CT, I urge you to support Raised Bill 5443. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Kathleen Sullivan  
11 Gun Mill Road  
Bloomfield, CT 06002  
[kpcsullivan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kpcsullivan@sbcglobal.net)  
(860) 463-1298

Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5443

Sarah Beckwith

CATALES, INC

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING

I am a registered voter in Rocky Hill, and I am a volunteer at CATALES, INC.

I am in charge of all CATALES, INC adoptions, and take all phone and email messages. I care deeply for animals and feel it is vital for all animals to be spayed and neutered, and to be vaccinated. Catales, Inc feeds many feral colonies. We also spay and neuter all of these cats. I think it is very important for all Animal Control Officers to be trained to and to enable them to sterilize adopted animals before they are released from the shelter. Many animals are euthanized every day. If more were sterilized this would help control the population and in turn less animals would need to be euthanized.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Sarah Beckwith

stor1399@hotmail.com

24 Farview Dr.

Rocky Hill, CT 06067

TESTIMONY CONCERNING RAISED BILL 5446

Janice Lund

Berlin Animal Control

I would like to thank the environment committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill 5446, An Act concerning the payment procedure for the sterilization and vaccinations of certain dogs and cats and providing for Animal Control Officer training

I am a registered voter in Berlin and I am an Animal Control Officer in Berlin, CT.

I have been with Berlin Animal Control since 1988, full time since 1998 I have seen many new Bills passed which have benefited Animal Control in many ways

I work closely with a registered Animal Organization that assists the Berlin Animal Control with adopting our animals and providing medical care at their expense for sick and injured animals.

This bill would insure that ALL animals are neutered prior to adoption. The compliance rate with the voucher a new adopter receives is less than 70 % That is not acceptable

In these bad economic times, I find the average family cannot afford to neuter their new pet even with the discount they receive with the state voucher

I volunteer at a monthly low cost spay/neuter clinic and know firsthand the difficulties families are having financially in neutering their pets. Spaying and neutering not only help curb the pet over population, it makes for healthier pets

Our commitment as ACO's are to enforce the humane ethical treatment of animals Please help us to continue to do our jobs the best way we can by passing this bill.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify and I hope you will strongly support this legislation.

Thank you

Janice Lund

Berlin ACO

860-828-7055 office

860-250-5089 cell

Bill 5446 would help ensure the well-being of animals at various stages of their interaction with animal control officers. The requirement that ACOs receive substantial training and ongoing education in caring for animals is a significant contribution toward preventing tragedies like that in Naugatuck.

I strongly encourage you to pass this bill, which can improve the well-being of Connecticut's sheltered, homeless, and otherwise needy animals.

Thank you

Daryn David, Ph.D.

73 Hawthorne Avenue

Hamden, CT 06517

Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446

Noranne Nielsen  
Mansfield Animal Control  
4 South Eagleville Rd  
Mansfield, CT 06268

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Mansfield, and I am the Animal Control Officer in Mansfield.

I strongly support this bill. The job of an Animal Control Officer is multi faceted, complex and can be dangerous and you need to be properly trained to be able to serve the public well and keep the public safe. For example I'm NACA certified level 1 and 2, because I feel it's irresponsible to work as an ACO without being certified and not knowing the CT Animal Control Laws. I have been an ACO for almost 13 years and have met several fellow officers who are not familiar with the ACO laws and State animal control procedures, which is worrisome and needs to change. An Animal Control Officer fills a very important role in the community in helping animals and people.

Spaying and neutering adoptable shelter animals while they are still at the shelter totally makes sense. I have been doing this for years. I refuse to let pets (when old enough) leave the shelter unneutered. The new adopter fills out the state voucher, pays the fees and we bring the dog/cat to the vet. After the surgery the dog or cat recovers for a couple of days and then goes to it's new home. This works perfectly. Making it a law would be wonderful and would help especially the pit bull overpopulation in CT. Currently, 100% of the Mansfield shelter dogs are pit bulls. From my experience, State vouchers are not always used after adoption. Spaying/neutering through the shelter solves this problem. The only negative for some officers could be that it costs time, but in my opinion it's time well spend. It also weeds out the people that want to breed with shelter animals, because the moment they find out the dog will be fixed before it goes out, they lose interest.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Noranne Nielsen  
4 South Eagleville Rd  
Mansfield, CT 06268  
860-487-0137

March 15, 2012

Members of the Environment Committee  
Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446  
Susan Kautz, R.N.  
Haddam Animal Rescue

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support for Raised Bill 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Haddam and I am the sole volunteer / operator of Haddam Animal Rescue which is a very small dog and cat rescue. Over the past fifteen years, I have been gravely disappointed by the lack of knowledge, ethics, compassion, accountability and reliability among several Animal Control Officers (ACOs) in Connecticut whom I have been in contact with during several rescue efforts. I strongly believe that an Animal Control Officer Training program is necessary to assist in advancing a better quality and consistency of training among ACOs.

This past Fall, I was alerted to a situation in a nearby town in Connecticut where there had been a loose, scared dog (with tags and collar on) in a small patch of woods behind a gas station on a very busy road for approximately **SEVEN MONTHS**, as noted and confirmed by several local residents. They had placed many calls to the town's ACO during this time period with little to no response. He told one person that he'd tried to catch the dog but he couldn't. As cold weather was approaching, I was very concerned for this dog and called the ACO. I told him I had a have-a-heart trap and would try to catch him. I set the trap and caught the dog in one and a half days. The October snow-storm arrived a few days after her capture and buried the area where the dog had been living in snow and debris. What would have happened to this dog if I'd not rescued her? If the town's ACO had more compassion, knowledge and accountability to the residents and animals of the town, perhaps the dog would not have had to live at risk, in fear and isolation, for seven months.

I also believe that no animal should be adopted out of Animal Control Services un-spayed or un-neutered, unless deemed too old or ill by a licensed veterinarian. I urge you to support this bill that would permit ACOs to redeem State vouchers to have eligible and adoptable animals sterilized prior to adoption. In the past, far too many have been released, unaltered, and consequently more puppies were born, entering the cycle of stray/impound/ euthanize. Please help stop this cycle.

Please take all necessary steps to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Susan Kautz, R.N.  
Haddam Animal Rescue  
3 Beckwith Rd.  
Haddam, CT 06438

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Kay McCarthy**  
**Treasurer, SAFE, Inc.**  
**Treasurer, Hamden Happy Tails Foundation, Inc.**  
**Registered Voter, Hamden, CT**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am so overwhelmed with the stories of how some of our municipal shelters are run and the incompetence of the Animal Control Officers involved, as well as their indifference to the plight of the animals in their care

Connecticut has a system in which people are hired as animal control officers with no training in enforcing animal protection laws, insuring public safety, or caring for the animals for which they are responsible. Many of them don't even like animals and have no business being in the business at all

Animal Control Officers often find themselves in dangerous situations with no training to call upon, and many professional animal control officers recognize the great need for training and will support this important piece of legislation. This bill will require much-needed training, as well as continuing education, for every Animal Control Officer in our State. Hopefully, this will create animal control officers who are professional, competent and genuinely interested in the work of animal protection and public safety.

Raised bill 5446 will also provide a much-needed procedure that will allow Animal Control Officers to redeem the Animal Population Control Program's Spay/Neuter voucher before the release of the animal from the shelter. This will enable conscientious Animal Control Officers to make sure that adopted animals leave the pound vaccinated for rabies and sterilized so they are not a public safety threat and so more unwanted animals are not born.

There are many Animal Control Officers, prosecutors, municipal officials and citizens who want to improve the performance and reputation of Connecticut Animal Control Officers for the good of all ACO's, the community, and the animals in their care.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify, and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Kay McCarthy  
422 West Todd Street  
Hamden, CT 06518  
203-288-3686 phone  
203-230-2456 fax

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Elizabeth Nyczak**  
**Have fostered for Labs4Rescue and AmericanLabRescue**  
**Contributor to Our Companions Animal Sanctuary**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Plainville, CT 06062.

**I CARE ABOUT ANIMALS AND WHY THIS BILL NEEDS TO BE SUPPORTED**

- My husband and I have fostered several dogs and have adopted from local rescue groups. Nearly all those rescued were spayed/neutered by the rescue group.
- I feel it is very important for these pets to be spayed/neutered prior to adoption.
- If a pet is rescued from a local pound, and has already been sterilized and vaccinated, this will help control the pet population and made the adoption process easier.

The first dogs we "purchased" for \$25 apiece were mixed breed ten week old puppies. Penny and Sparky came from a litter of 12 puppies. The owner had not spayed the mother and she was allowed to roam free. Later I heard that this same dog had a second litter of six puppies. Imagine if a dog like this were adopted from a local pound and had already been spayed, 18 less dogs would need to be placed into loving homes.

Unfortunately, not all owners realize the importance of sterilizing their pets. A bill like the one proposed would help to decrease Connecticut's pet population.

Please pass bill 5446!

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Nyczak  
44 Skyline Drive  
Plainville, CT 06062  
[Elizabeth.nyczak@snet.net](mailto:Elizabeth.nyczak@snet.net)

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**

**JOAN LAMONT  
ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER  
PRESIDENT, CATS NORTHEAST**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Mansfield, and I am both an Animal Control Officer (Windham) and a longtime animal welfare volunteer.

I support this bill from the perspective of both roles.

As an Animal Control Officer (ACO) who received essentially no training in the proposed topics of ACO instruction other than what I sought on my own, I strongly urge passage of this bill on the basis of the need for standardization in the profession. There is an enormous range of competence and motivation among ACOs and recent stories in the news regarding substandard personnel bear witness to the passion that the public has for companion animals and their treatment. Today's ACO is not just a "dog catcher," s/he is also a social worker, a psychologist, an advertising executive (marketing animals in need of homes), a fundraiser, a wildlife handler, a resource for medical care, just to name a few. Whenever standards are created to define and quantify a profession, the level of performance based upon these expectations tends to rise. I have been a dissatisfied "customer" of lackluster ACOs many times in my life and the cost of this training is far outweighed by the benefits. Any town official knows how animal issues can affect the quality of life for their residents and how lack of effective problem-solving on the part of Animal Control departments gets their phones ringing.

I also support the portion of the bill that would enable ACOs to sterilize pound animals with state vouchers prior to adoption, since that is the only way to ensure 100% compliance. We who have seen the cost of pet overpopulation to society as well as to companion animals do not want to see the animals from our facilities adding to the problem by going on to reproduce. The funding is there to be used; passage of this bill will help to ensure that it is not offered in vain.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Joan Lamont  
POB 345  
Mansfield Center  
860-429-7899

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**March 16, 2012**  
**Ashlee Leone, Assistant Animal Control Officer**  
**for the Town of Ellington**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Ellington, and I have been an Assistant Animal Control Officer for almost 5 years. I feel it is important to support the bills that pertain to my profession and give testimony as to why.

The first part of this bill, concerning the payment procedure for the sterilization and vaccination of dogs and cats, would benefit the animals and the pounds across the state tremendously. So many people turn away from adopting intact cats and dogs. To a lot of people it is just a hassle and not something they want to deal with when they first bring their new pets home. More importantly this bill will allow us to do our part by helping to control the population of dogs and cats. Too many people want their pets to have to "just one" litter. This is irresponsible and un-needed. There are so many dogs and cats already out there, that need homes. Why contribute to the possibility of more being reproduced. Overall, if we are able to spay/neuter and vaccinate before animals are adopted out, it makes them much more desirable to the public, especially first time pet owners.

The second part of this bill pertains to providing training for Animal Control Officers. I personally like to think of my job as a profession. We are doing so much more than picking up stray dogs and cleaning kennels. We are enforcing the law, providing peace in neighborhood disputes, handling all dispositions of animals both domestic and wild, and educating the public. By implementing a training program, this will bring us one step closer to getting the recognition of being an "OFFICER". Many of us started our jobs by being handed the keys and the book of CT State Statutes, and sent off to do our work. Some municipalities don't even have a continuing education fund for Animal Control in their budget. It is extremely important that the Animal Control Officers of CT are given the opportunity to receive training for our job duties. We are in a profession which is continuously evolving and presented with new laws almost every session. The training will not only give us credibility but also decrease liability. This training will be the next step in evolving our profession into something even greater.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Ashlee Leone  
Assistant Animal Control Officer  
Town of Ellington  
55 Main St - P.O. Box 187  
Ellington, CT 06029  
(860) 870-3155  
aleone@ellington-ct.gov

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Ms. Jennifer Colucci**  
**OPIN, Inc (Outreach to Pets In Need)**  
**PO Box 488, Riverside, CT 06878**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Stamford, CT, and also Secretary of OPIN, a 501c3 registered nonprofit organization as well as a volunteer with the Stamford Animal Care & Control facility located at 201 Magee Avenue, Stamford, CT 06902.

I have been a volunteer with the shelter since April 2003 and have watched many animals come through the shelter, be adopted into happy homes and finally end a life of birthing, thus reducing the population of homeless animals that could potentially enter the Connecticut shelter system.

Spaying and neutering every animal prior to adoption has long been a practice of the Stamford Shelter, with little additional time spent on the part of the ACO's because the shelter already makes trips to it veterinarian practice as a normal part of business. This is done efficiently and is appreciated by the adopters.

Instituting such a program within the shelter system has obvious benefits; just a few are:

1. Weeding out people who want an animal for breeding purposes.
2. Helping to educate the public in regards to the practice of altering pets.
3. An obvious reduction in homeless pet population.
4. Reducing dog bites (the majority caused by unneutered male dogs).
5. Convenience to the adopter as their pet comes to them already altered and vaccinated.

As well, I am a deep supporter of ACO Training both for the benefit of the animals and the benefit of the ACO who covers many areas of responsibility. Each ACO should be afforded adequate training in their position; training that is formalized and standardized to better prepare them for the challenges of their jobs, both in a professional and humane manner

I urge you to support Raised Bill #5446 to better serve the animals and the people who work with them.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to write and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Jennifer Colucci  
25 Cantwell Avenue  
Stamford, CT 06905  
(203)348-4397  
jennycolucci@optonline net

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5443**  
**Ann Gerschefski**  
**New Fairfield/Sherman Animal Welfare Society**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Sherman, and I am the president of the Board of Directors at the New Fairfield/Sherman Animal Welfare Society.

Connecticut is in many ways in good shape as far as the pet overpopulation problem. However, we can go much further, especially with respect to the pit bull overpopulation problem, which is far from under control. Pit bulls are by far the most common breed seen in our state's municipal animal control facilities. This breed is known to deteriorate in animal shelter environments. This breed is also commonly misunderstood by the public, so finding adopters for this breed can be difficult. The combination of these 2 issues often leads to euthanasia of these wonderful dogs. Therefore, we need to reduce the number of pit bulls entering our municipal dog pounds. The way to do that is to spay/neuter all dogs and cats (not just pit bulls) before they are adopted. This eliminates all risk of the animals procreating following adoption.

In my experience at my organization, adopters are not always responsible about using the spay/neuter voucher that is given to them when they adopt. If this voucher is not used promptly, the inevitable result is puppies, and these puppies often end up being brought to shelters when the owner cannot find homes for them. Therefore, we have instituted a policy that we do not let animals leave our shelter unaltered. That way we know that we will not have to take the unwanted progeny into our facility in the future.

I am also in favor of vaccinating all animals before they leave municipal facilities. Adopters are often excited about their new pet, and sometimes taking the new pet to a vet for altering and vaccination is the last thing on an adopter's mind. Therefore, the safest thing to do is to provide that vet care BEFORE the animal leaves the facility.

On a more general note, I strongly support improved education for animal control officers. Animal control officers need to be trained to see themselves as "animal services directors", providing service to the public, but more important, to the animals themselves. It does an animal no service if you lock it in a cage and don't tell potential adopters that it is there. Those of us who follow these issues closely are seeing some improvement at some facilities, but not at others. ACO's need to learn to accept help from "outsiders", and not see that help as a threat to their power, but rather as a way to help get the animals to safety.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify, and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Ann Gerschefski  
4 Hubbell Mountain Rd.  
Sherman, CT  
06784  
anngersch@gmail.com

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in West Haven, and I am an Animal Control Officer within the State of Connecticut.

I have been an Animal Control Officer for over 15 years. Animal Control Officers play many rolls in their communities. My Animal Control is a Division of a Police Department that enforces all State Laws and Town Ordinance related to animals. It is the responsibility of the Animal Control Division to investigate roaming dogs, animal bites, cruelty to animals, barking nuisance, unreasonable tethering or confining of a dog, town defecation ordinance, leash law, valid rabies vaccination, dog licensure and rabies related wildlife complaints that present an eminent danger to the public. It is the goal of my Animal Control Division to educate the public on humane animal care and to place impounded animals into qualified homes.

We have a lot of responsibility and we are responsible for determining outcomes in the lives of animals and human beings. Animal Control Officers have the power to arrest people. Animal Control Officers are not required to be trained in the State of CT. Does this make sense? Not to me.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Rachel Solveira  
15 Laurel Street  
West Haven, CT 06516  
203-231-7990

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**

Jane Peterson Matanga

Volunteer, Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary & Connecticut Votes For  
Animals

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I am a registered voter in Cheshire, Connecticut and I am an avid animal welfare supporter and a Volunteer for Our Companions and for Connecticut Votes for Animals. I want to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446. I feel strongly that we need to advocate for animals and put standardized guidelines and training in place for Animal Control Officers.

I cannot stress enough that this bill needs to be supported. Everyone recognizes that it is important for us to have protections and safe standards and guide lines concerning and especially for the sterilization and vaccination of certain dogs and cats. Proper training for Animal Control Officers will require Animal Control Officers in Connecticut to be trained in the proper medical procedures involved in the sterilization process for adopted animals before they are released from the shelter. As a volunteer for Labs 4 Rescue, as well as a volunteer for Our Companions and Connecticut Votes for Animals, I cannot express in words what I have seen in terms of poor medical or nonexistent guidelines for proper medical sterilization of adopted animals. The results are unspeakable.

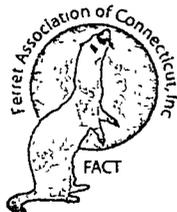
I have witnessed improper procedures performed on animals resulting in medical complications, infection and great pain to animals treated by improperly trained or untrained staff. I have also witnessed dogs and cats in need of medical care and the results of not getting the proper care that is necessary. Not a sight for the faint of heart. Not sterilizing dogs and cats creates the problems that all animal lovers and rescue organizations are currently addressing in the animal rescue world. Those issues would be dogs and cats that are not properly cared for those that are either, abandoned, mistreated, and homeless. The list goes on. Connecticut municipalities need to require appropriate care, I.E. sterilization and vaccination before dogs and cats leave our town shelters.

I strongly urge you to support this bill which will help to alleviate some of the problems we are currently experiencing in our municipalities and town shelters. If you want to continue to help working to protect these animals, please support Bill 5446!

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Very Sincerely Yours,

Jane Peterson Matanga  
40 Nathan Hale Court  
Cheshire, Ct 06410  
JaneMatanga@cox.net



14 Sherbrooke Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106-3838  
ferret-fact.org  
860 247 1275

March 10, 2012

To the Environmental Committee of the CT State Legislation  
**Re: Bill Number 5446**

I am writing to express my support for H.B. #5446, **AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.**

I have been a registered voter in the city of Hartford for over 30 years and a resident of Connecticut for over 50 years. I am also the Director of the Ferret Association of Connecticut, a nonprofit humane and educational organization dedicated to helping domestic pet ferrets, both by educating current and prospective owners and providing shelter for lost or abandoned ferrets.

As we at the Ferret Association enter our 21<sup>st</sup> year of operation, we have worked with a number of animal control officers. Many are caring individuals who go above and beyond the confines of their town mandates to help every animal possible, sometimes at their own expense. Alas, some others appear to be stuck in time in the days where each town's mayor or selectman hired a crony to "catch dogs." They will only work with dogs, may shelter them in substandard conditions, and euthanize them as soon as they can. Called to investigate cruelty, hoarding, or abandoned cats or other animals, these latter individuals couldn't care less and are prompt to say so.

The profession of animal control officer, overall, has long progressed beyond this limited scope. It is well past time that a progressive, animal-friendly state such as Connecticut require that each officer who deals with animals and the public have adequate training to do their job effectively and humanely

It is also vital that no animal be adopted out of a pound in our state without being altered. If we ever hope to stem the tide of cat and pit bull overpopulation, allowing unaltered animals to reenter the general population is senseless and only ends up costing us all even more as they breed more problems, literally and figuratively.

While our organization deals with domestic ferrets, our members also own cats and dogs and are extremely interested in the welfare of all animals. Funding a requirement that all animals adopted from municipal animal shelters be altered is smart, humane, and frugal. Obliging those who handle our non-human companions be properly trained in animal care and humane education is only sensible.

I ask you support H B. 5446 and thank you for your time

L. Vanessa Gruden, Director  
Ferret Association of Connecticut



City of Middletown  
 Animal Control Department  
 222 Main Street  
 Middletown, CT 06457  
 Phone (860) 344-3298

Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446  
 Gail Petras – Animal Control Officer  
 March 16, 2012

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill 5446 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING

I have been an Animal Control Officer in Connecticut for nearly ten years. Since I was first introduced to this profession, I have been bewildered by the lack of required training standards in this field. This has prompted me to become active in several organizations that support and offer annual training opportunities for ACOs.

There have been far too many cases on the news in the last year blaming ACOs for not doing their job properly. In many of these cases, ACOs have been fired or investigated for criminal acts. While I will not defend their acts, I will say that it is unfair to accuse them of not doing their jobs properly when they may not have had ANY training on how to do the job in the first place.

When Police Officers are hired, they must attend the Police Academy for almost five months of training and then attend mandatory recertification classes periodically. Imagine that you are hired as a Police Officer and immediately put on the job with one full year to complete initial training. Seems outrageous, right? Most ACOs have powers of arrest regarding animal laws and deal with the same criminals as the Police. The Police, along with the public, look to us for our expertise in animal related laws and care because we are Animal Control Officers. In order to properly investigate animal cases, we must be trained in the basics of securing a crime scene, photographing it and collecting evidence. Cases can and will get dismissed if we do not process search, seizure and arrest warrants properly or inadvertently violate the rights of the accused due to lack of proper training.

I work with numerous professional, educated, Animal Control Officers throughout the state. We work extremely hard to excel in our field and to get as much training as we can. We are putting our lives on the line every day to protect the general public and the animals that they keep. We work tirelessly to prosecute offenders of horrible cruelty and we do not want our hard work to be wasted because we make a mistake due to lack of training. Most of us work to acquire training wherever and whenever possible because we care. We are often told that our departments cannot afford it. Million-dollar lawsuits on the news should show our departments that they cannot afford NOT to train us.

I am fortunate to be part of a department that values training. They understand that proper training is critical to proper investigating and prosecution. They realize that \$525 for 40 hours of top-notch training is a small price to pay when my safety and my department's reputation is on the line. Unfortunately, not all departments feel this way, so we need to mandate training to ensure that we are ALL prepared to do our jobs to the best of our ability.

While I am passionately supportive of this bill, I do not think that the funding should come from the Animal Population Control account. Those funds should be used as intended for spaying and neutering our adoptable animals. Local municipalities need to be responsible for training their officers. A one-time training cost of less than \$1100 per officer is not an exorbitant expense. By investing in their ACOs, they will gain educated, loyal employees who feel valued and professional.

We have already lost an excellent Animal Control Officer in CT in the line of duty, Theresa Foss. Her name is on the wall of heroes at the National Animal Control Association Memorial Wall and Garden along with 19 other ACOs. Many, many more have been lost or injured in the line of duty. I wonder how many lives might have been saved with proper training.

We are no longer "dog catchers", we are Animal Control Officers. We are proud to do our jobs and the time has come to officially "raise the bar". Please help us to pass this bill and give our profession the respect and recognition that it deserves.

Sincere thanks,

Gail Petras  
 Animal Control Officer – Middletown, CT

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446****Barbara Rudnick, March 16, 2012****Member CT Votes for Animals**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the Opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING

I am a registered voter in East Berlin and a former volunteer with both the Berlin and New Britain Animal Control facilities.

For over 20 years I have worked with animal welfare and was a member of Compassionate Care Animal Center and the Underhound Railroad.

*As a volunteer I soon discovered that dogs left in a cage did not do well when prospective adopters came to see them. Their behavior was simply a result of lack of human physical contact and exercise. Therefore we walked them, played ball etc. Some, but not all ACO's understand that the quality of life for a shelter dog is very important if we are to find them a loving home. Doesn't it make sense to make money in adopting a dog to a loving home as opposed to spending money to end their life? I have been told that all ACO's care about animals and although most of those I have worked with do, unfortunately for some it is just a job. In New Britain although many blankets were donated I was asked not to give them to the dogs because they could get wet if dragged to the outside of the cage in the rain. I also was asked not to give bones or balls because they could possibly go down the drains. I have listened to these dogs bark incessantly, seen the fear in their eyes as they cowered in the corner or under the bed, watched them lose weight and hair with a look of hopelessness in their eyes. Simple acts of compassion are so important to a shelter dog and should be required. This is why I support this bill.*

*I have witnessed dogs that did not get along placed in cages right next to each other, when numerous other runs were available. Would it simply not be common sense to separate them rather than antagonize them?*

*I have witnessed deadly Parvo outbreaks where appropriate protocol was not followed*

*One dog I was not allowed to walk because the ACO stated he was "moody". The following week I was told he was going to be euthanized. I did ask if he had bitten anyone and again I was told it was because he was "moody". Fortunately a prospective adopter heard this and asked to meet with the dog. When the dog came out he was incredibly well behaved and went home with the young man and his wife. When I called regarding the dog at a later date I was told he was the best dog he ever had. Only someone with appropriate training should be making decisions regarding the life or death of a dog.*

*We were asked not to request applications because they were discriminatory. Adopting to the first*

*person who comes to the shelter without any kind of screening process is simply irresponsible and could result in the dog being returned to the shelter. New Britain has a large percentage of dogs that are Pit Bulls. Many had been used in fights and for breeding purposes. For years we requested that dogs that are to be adopted be spayed or neutered in order to break the cycle and lower the number of dogs brought or returned to the shelter.*

*I have seen dogs that required veterinary care but did not receive it. One dog Francis suffered for days with the worst case of mange I had ever seen. Again there should be guidelines and training regarding care that are consistent.*

*An officer with the DOA once informed me that I would be surprised to find out how many ACO's were not familiar with the statutes. I responded that if they were not, especially those in the position over 20 years then they should not be allowed to continue to do the job. Their job is too important to be left to those that are not trained or qualified.*

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Barbara Rudnick  
East Berlin, CT 06023

**Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 5446**  
**Amy Harrell**  
**Connecticut Votes for Animals, Board Member**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the Opportunity to express my support of Raised Bill, 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

I would like to join so many others in my support of this important bill that I believe would truly make a difference. Until recently, I naively assumed Animals Control Officers needed special credentials: certain education, degrees, perhaps a training course certificate. I was appalled to discover they do not. I fear for an ACO's safety when they need to deal with dangerous animals, and I fear the animals they handle are not being cared for properly. A training program for Animal Control Officers is sorely needed.

The costs of pet over-population is staggering - not only does it cost taxpayer money, but it costs countless hours of time and energy for those trying to rescue and find homes for these animals. For anyone who loves animals, it also emotionally exhausting and overwhelming to face such an enormous and heartbreaking problem everyday. Allowing ACOs to spay/neuter animals before releasing them to adopters would go such a long way toward alleviating the ordeal of pet overpopulation.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify. I strongly urge you to take swift action on this bill so that it may pass this session.

Thank you,

Amy Harrell  
4 Pleasant st  
Vernon, CT

**H – 1128**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2012**

**VOL.55  
PART 6  
1746 – 2095**

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5230, as amended by House "A."

The total number voting	145
Necessary for passage	73
Yea	145
Nay	0
Not voting	6

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The bill as amended is passed.

Mr. Clerk, kindly call Calendar 255.

THE CLERK:

On page 16, Calendar 255, Substitute for House  
Bill Number 5446, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT  
PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF  
CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL  
CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING, favorable report of the  
Committee on Environment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The distinguished Dean of the House of  
Representatives, Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's  
favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The question is on acceptance and passage.

Would you explain the bill, please, madam?

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This will requires new animal control officers or ACOs who begin work after July 1st, to complete at least 80 hours of initial ACO training. It also requires ACOs, all ACOs, including the current ones, to complete at least six hours of continuing education annually. The Agriculture Commissioner will provide -- prescribe the initial training curriculum.

The bill also allows a pound to complete and retain a voucher to have the animal sterilized and vaccinated before it is released --

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative --

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

-- to the person --

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

-- Mushinsky, could you just suspend for a moment, please?

Getting a little noisy. You could take your

conversations outside so I can hear Representative Mushinsky.

Representative Mushinsky, please proceed again.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Thank you.

The second thing the bill does is to allow the pound to complete and retain a voucher to have the animal sterilized and vaccinated before releasing it to the person adopting or buying it.

This bill establishes professional training and promotes best practices in animal care and public safety, and I urge your support for this measure.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, madam.

The distinguished Ranking Member of the Environment Committee, Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some questions to the proponent, through you, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Proceed, sir.

REP. CHAPIN (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In lines 9 through 17, it would appear that under existing law we require the pound to provide a voucher, and it looks like we're, under this legislation we would then require them to not only provide it but to also fill it out and give it to the perspective buyer. Is that correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Correct, the pound will be -- is allowed to complete the voucher for the sterilization and vaccination of such a dog. And -- and then they either provide it to the person buying or adopting or they can do the procedure through their own offices and then adopt out the dog or cat.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And in lines 31 through 35, it -- it appears that if a dog isn't purchased and suffers from this particular condition, can you -- the gentlelady tell

me the reason why we would then provide a voucher in a case such as that?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a special case. This is the disease pyometra, which is an infection of the uterus. And in this one instance, the -- if the animal has not been purchased or adopted from the pound, the pound representative may complete the voucher and submit it to the participating veterinarian for the sterilization and vaccination and treatment of this ill animal.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And again through you, moving on to the section which would require new animal control officer train -- animal control officers to have training, can the gentlelady point to where it says 80 hours? I believe I heard her say that it was 80 hours.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

mhr/tmj/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

120  
April 18, 2012

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I will find the section for you.

A VOICE:

Line 71, Representative, shall consist of 80.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Mr. Speaker, through you, the 80-hour-or-more  
of instruction requirement is in line 71.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And again through you, in lines 56 through 66,  
where the requirement for the training would occur  
or for the ACOs to be required to have training, if  
a municipality chooses to or needs to hire -- or a  
region needs to hire an animal control officer after  
July 1, does that person already have to have the  
training or is there some time period that they're  
allowed to get the training once they're hired?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Through --

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

(Inaudible.)

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

-- you, Mr. Speaker, the -- the bill says that no person may begin serving in the position, on or after July 1st, unless the person has completed a training program, so that's pretty clear.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And again through you, in line 61, as I read this, it says "or submits an affidavit to the Commissioner agreeing to complete such a training program not later than one year after beginning such position." So as I read that, it looks like the person either has to be hired with the training or they're given a year to complete the training. Could the proponent tell me if I'm reading that correctly?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, that's just as it states. Those are the two options; come in with the training, 80 hours or submit an affidavit agreeing to the training and completing it not later than one year after beginning the position. There is a certificate that goes with the training, so it will be clear if the person is certified.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And again, through you, in the type of training program, we're not outlining in this legislation who actually provides that training; is that correct? We're just providing certain guidelines that the Commissioner of Agriculture would have to make sure that any trainer would follow?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative --

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Through you --

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

-- Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

-- Mr. Speaker.

Yes, that is correct. The commissioner suggests that it will probably be done through the community colleges or the post program. These ACOs are officers and we do have officer training currently.

The irony of this whole situation is the officers have arrest powers now, but they don't have training yet. So this bill will correct that problem and there will be professional training, most likely at the community college or post officer training facility.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And again through you, it's also my understanding that training does take place currently, and that's done, I believe, by what they call "NACA", which I think is the National Animal Control Association. I would assume then that since

we're only providing the guidelines here, that if the commissioner found NACA has a program that's -- that meets these guidelines, they could also provide the training. Would the proponent agree with that?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

That's certainly another choice for training these officers. I think what we have now is an uneven system where some are more professionally trained and some are less professionally trained. And what we will have is a standardized system of training, and every ACO will be a professional, having gone through professional training.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And again through you, it's my understanding that there are roughly, I think the number is 290 animal control officers; that would be state animal control, regional animal control, and municipal animal control. If I'm remembering the number

correctly, I -- I think it's estimated that there may be about 30 per year that through attrition or those who may choose to go into another line of work, about 30 a year that would be required to receive this new training. Is that correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes; estimate is 30 a year.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again through you.

And would the town have to pay for that training? I -- and I apologize if the gentlelady has already in her summary mentioned that.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The reimbursement for the training comes from

the Animal Spay and Neuter Fund account, which the State of Connecticut has under the Department of Agriculture.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And hopefully my last question to the proponent; and there's plenty of money in that account to cover at least 30 trainees per year?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Yes, through you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, the fiscal note affirms that that's the case.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I thank the gentlelady for her answers.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill before us. Certainly the -- the -- the increased

use of vouchers would be a good thing. These are traditionally some program that's underutilized, so for us to be able to find a way to increase their use and further address the issue of overpopulation of animals in the state is -- is certainly a policy worthy of moving forward.

In the past on the animal control officer training, I've -- was never a big fan of requiring training, but I think we've passed bills in this -- in this body in recent years that highlighted some of the reasons why training may be a good idea. And I -- I think the bill before us offers a nice approach and makes it prospective. It doesn't require the municipality to limit the universe of people by making sure that they're already trained. When they're hired, the municipality has the option of hiring from a larger pool of people, including those who may not be trained. I think that that's definitely a big benefit in this bill.

And obviously we're all always concerned about passing along unfunded mandates on our municipalities, in this case we've found a viable funding source to pay for the training. So I think the bill before us is a -- a good bill, and I

encourage my colleagues to support it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir.

The gentlewoman from Fairfield, Representative Kupchick.

REP. KUPCHICK (132nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in support of this legislation; my experience is long in this area. I worked in a congressional office for seven years, which I've mentioned in the past, and I handled animal-rights' issues.

Particularly Bridgeport and Stamford and Norwalk, inner cities had a tremendous amount of action, say, in their shelters. I spent a lot of time working with the animal rights' groups who supported the Bridgeport Animal Shelter, which is statistically the busiest animal shelter in the entire state of Connecticut. They take in more unwanted animals than any other shelter.

There were numerous problems with the shelter, ACOs who weren't training and -- and just huge amount of difficulties and problems. And

fortunately for the animals and for the people of Bridgeport, they were able to get a very fine ACO who took over. And this ACO has had to pay for his own training over the years, just so he could be up to date, because he deals with rabid animals, vicious animals; he goes into very undesirable situations to take animals out, and it is a public safety issue.

And they should be trained. When people come across a sick animal, the first person they call is your animal control officer. So an animal control officer should be well trained. And I just wanted to mention that I think that -- that the spay and neuter program funding going toward it is a very positive thing.

And I've heard from other ACOs that there are animal control officers in the state who have absolutely no background in animal control. So it is, I think, extremely important, not just because of my concern for animals but also for the public, because, again, it is a safety, a public safety issue.

So I rise in strong support of this bill and I'm very, very glad to see it here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, madam.

The gentlewoman from North Stonington,  
Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I, too, stand in strong support of this bill for all the reasons that have been brought up by my colleagues. But, in particular, last year we did pass a bill, cross-reporting of animal cruelty and child abuse. And if you look at the training that's going to be required in the future for our animal control officers, you will see that it does talk about documenting animal cruelty, evidence, and courtroom procedures. And we have found in some of the most awful cases of animal cruelty that the particular animal control officer did not feel comfortable with their arrest powers or with their ability to actually charge somebody with animal cruelty.

And as we move forward with this bill, I'm very hopeful that this will allow us to move forward with this red flag for future violent behavior,

which is what animal cruelty can so often be.

So I thank the proponent of the bill, and I urge my colleagues to vote for it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, madam.

Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on the bill?

If not, staff and guests, please come to the well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call; all members to the Chamber, please. The House of Representatives is voting by roll call.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked.

And, Mr. Clerk, if you'd kindly announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5446.

Total number voting

144

mhr/tmj/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

132  
April 18, 2012

Necessary for passage	73
Those voting Yea	144
Nay	0
Not voting	7

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The bill is passed.

Mr. Clerk, kindly call Calendar 124.

THE CLERK:

On page 36, Calendar 124, House Bill Number 5345, AN ACT CONCERNING THE POWERS OF CERTAIN AGENTS AND OFFICERS OF THE UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE, favorable report from a Committee of Judiciary.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Distinguished Vice Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Question is on acceptance and passage.

Will you explain the bill, please, sir?

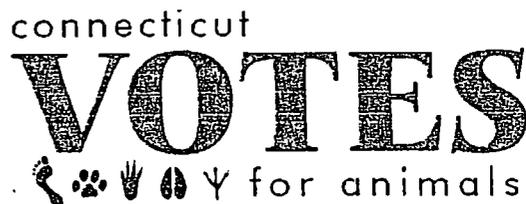
REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
PART 3  
680 - 1023**

**2012**



**Testimony of Debora M. Bresch, Esq.  
Senior Director, Government Relations, ASPCA  
President, CT Votes for Animals**

**In Opposition to HB 5408 – An Act Concerning Adoption Fees for Dogs**

HB5446

**Joint Planning and Development Committee  
March 9, 2012**

Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile, and fellow Planning and Development Committee members, thank you for this opportunity to comment on House Bill 5408 (An Act Concerning Adoption Fees for Dogs). As many of you know, my name is Debora Bresch, and I am an attorney and lobbyist with the Government Relations Department of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), which counts almost **22,000 Connecticut residents among its supporters**. I am also President of CT Votes for Animals (CVA).

HB 5408 would authorize a municipality to assess the cost of sterilization and vaccination to an adopter or purchaser of a cat or dog from a public shelter. The ASPCA and CVA support the principle underlying HB 5408 - that cats and dogs should be spayed prior to release to the public - but not the mechanism by which this bill seeks to accomplish this.

Under Connecticut law, in return for \$45, every adopter of a cat or dog from a municipal shelter receives an Animal Population Control Program (APCP) voucher that may be applied toward the cost of sterilization and vaccination by a participating veterinarian. Pursuant to CGS §22-380i, a veterinarian who receives a voucher from an adopter will be reimbursed by the APCP as follows: \$20 for vaccinations plus a preset amount for sterilization based on the animal's sex and species - i.e., \$120 for a female dog, \$100 for a male dog, \$70 for a female cat, and \$50 for a male cat. The APCP statute does not cap the fee that may be charged by a participating veterinarian for sterilization and vaccination, and an adopter would be responsible for any difference

Testimony of Debora M. Bresch, Esq.  
Senior Director, Government Relations, ASPCA  
President, CT Votes for Animals  
In Opposition to HB 5408 – An Act Concerning Adoption Fees for Dogs  
Joint Public Safety and Development Committee  
March 9, 2012

between the value of the voucher and the actual cost. The ASPCA and CVA view this as a central flaw in the ACP, especially with respect to its low-income and feral cat programs, but also with respect to the its public shelter program, given the possibility that the prospect of extremely costly sterilization and vaccinations could deter adoption, or could deter use of the voucher post-adoption. Presently, only a little more than 2/3 of adopters from Connecticut's public shelters use the vouchers they are given; the remaining adopters allow the vouchers to lapse.

Under HB 5408, if a municipality were to sterilize/vaccinate a dog or cat prior to purchase/adoption, it is not clear what would happen to the ACP vouchers - and in particular, their cash value - to which all adopters from that town's shelter would be entitled. However, even if the municipality could in some way arrange for the vouchers' use, the cost of the sterilization/vaccinations would remain uncapped, allowing a municipality to charge in excess of what many adopters from the public shelter could afford. Again, the consequence could be decreased adoptions - particularly if an adopter would no longer have the option of shopping for the least expensive participating veterinarian.

As noted above, the ASPCA and CVA without question support pre-release sterilization and vaccinations. However, we believe that HB 5446 - legislation raised in the Environment Committee that would simply give animal control officers access to ACP vouchers prior to a cat or dog's release to an adopter - would be the better first step. Animal control officers could use the vouchers at area low-cost spay/neuter clinics prior to the animal's release - there are currently two such clinics in Connecticut, and a third is anticipated in the next year - where the vouchers would cover the full cost of the procedure. Or perhaps an animal control officer would be able to make an arrangement with a local veterinarian to accept the vouchers alone in exchange for all the shelter's business.

Ultimately, before we allow municipalities to charge adopters what they wish for cat and dog sterilizations and vaccinations as HB 5408 would permit, the ASPCA and CVA would seek passage of HB 5446, so that animal control officers would simply have access to ACP vouchers prior to a cat or dog's release.

**S - 648**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2012**

**VOL. 55  
PART 13  
3941 - 4222**

rc/law/gdm/gbr  
SENATE

271  
May 8, 2012

consent calendar thereafter.

First, Madam President, first item is calendar page 6, Calendar 364, House Bill 5089. Madam President, would move to place that item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Second item, calendar page 7, Calendar 378, House Bill 5554. Move to place the item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Moving to calendar page 8, Calendar 391, House Bill 5446. Madam President, move to place the item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Moving to calendar page 9, Calendar 395, House Bill 5483. Move to place the item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President. Calendar page 10, Calendar

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May 8, 2012

On calendar page 28, Calendar 512, House Bill 5424. Madam President, move to place the item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

And a final item is on calendar page 30, Calendar 522, House Bill 5289. Madam President, move to place this item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, if the Clerk would -- would read the items on the consent calendar for a verification and then if we might move to a vote on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

THE CLERK:

On page 6, Calendar 364, House Bill 5089; page 7, Calendar 378, House Bill 5554; page 8, Calendar 391, House Bill 5446; page 9, Calendar 395, House Bill 5483.

On page 10, Calendar 402, House Bill 5299; page 12, Calendar 425, House Bill 5476.

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On page 13, Calendar 426, House Bill 5443; on page 14, Calendar 438, House Bill 5347; Page 14, Calendar 439, House Bill 5388; page 15, Calendar 441, House Bill 5501.

Also on page 15, Calendar 442, House Bill 5536; page 16, Calendar 445, House Bill 5145; page 16, Calendar 446, House Bill 5395; on page 16, Calendar 448, House Bill 5414; page 17, Calendar 451, House Bill 5548; page 18, Calendar 456, House Bill 5285.

Also on page 18, Calendar 458, House Bill 5031; on page 20, Calendar 468, House Bill 5217; page 21, Calendar 471, House Bill 5164; page 22, Calendar 476, House Bill 5263.

On page 23, Calendar 485, House Bill 5237. On page 25, Calendar 497, House Bill 5512; page 26, Calendar 502, House Bill 5497; page 26, Calendar 503, House Bill 5409.

On page 28, Calendar 512, House Bill 5424. And on page 30, Calendar 522, House Bill 5289.

THE CHAIR:

That seems correct.

Mr. Clerk, would you please call for a roll call vote on the consent calendar. (Inaudible.)

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gomes, would you like to vote, please. Thank you.

If all members have voted, if all members have voted, the machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk, would you please call a tally.

THE CLERK:

On today's consent calendar,

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SENATE

279  
May 8, 2012

Total Number Voting           35  
Necessary for passage       18  
Those Voting Yea           35  
Those Voting Nay           0  
Those Absent and Not Voting           1

THE CHAIR:

The consent calendar passes.

Are there any points of personal privilege or  
announcements? Are there any points of personal  
privilege or announcements?

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Yes, Madam President, if there are no announcements or  
points of personal privilege, we will, of course, be in  
session tomorrow -- or actually it's later today but -- but  
not on Thursday. But --

THE CHAIR:

Okay. Promise?

SENATOR LOONEY:

-- we will -- we will convene later this morning. We will  
have a -- announce the Democratic caucus at eleven followed  
by session at noon today.

Thank you, Madam President.

With that, would move the Senate stand adjourned, subject  
to the call of the chair.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir. Everybody drive safely.

On motion of Senator Looney of the 11th, the Senate, at  
12:32 a.m. adjourned subject to the call of the chair.