



Testimony from Susan B. Linker

Board Chair CT Votes for Animals and Chief Executive Officer, Our Companions Animal Rescue

Testimony in Support of HB 5123- **An Act Concerning the Use of Certain Animals in Traveling Animal Acts.** -

Dear Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to express my strong support of House Bill 5123.

This bill has been raised before and it is my sincere hope that this time this issue is given the attention and priority it deserves. By prohibiting these exotic animals from traveling shows, it would be in line with a humane movement on this issue across the country; California, New Jersey, Hawaii, New York, Illinois, and over 100 cities have passed outright bans or restrictions on the use of wild animals in traveling acts.

This is because the neglectful conditions of exotic animals in traveling shows is well understood and documented. Animals in these circuses suffer from long periods in intense confinement, physical and social deprivation, and brutal often violent methods of control. Abnormal, stereotypic behavior, such as pacing or swaying or bobbing heads are common abnormalities seen in circus animals, indicating the animals are stressed.

Sadly, it has been reported that the USDA has failed to offer adequate oversight of animals in traveling entertainment shows creating a clear public safety risk.

Public sentiment on this issue is clear. Performances such as "the Big Apple", Cirque de Soleil have risen in popularity, are more family friendly and don't expose children to this showcase of cruelty. Even Ringling Brothers Circus recently announced its return to the circuit next year – without animals! I ask you to please act humanely and responsibly and let's make this year the year we no longer allow such cruelty and exploitation for these precious animals.

**Name:** Christine Kaminski

**Title:**

**Organization or Agency:**

**Topic:** HB05123 - AAC THE USE OF CERTAIN ANIMALS IN TRAVELING ANIMAL ACTS.  
Supports

**Testimony:**

Dear Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

I am a resident of Bridgeport, Connecticut, home of P.T. Barnum, and I am asking the Committee to support HB 5123, An Act Concerning the Use of Certain Animals in Traveling Animal Acts.

Bridgeport has joined more than 100 local communities and five states in enacting prohibitions. We know that P.T. Barnum was a one-of-a-kind character, and has a place in Bridgeport's history. But that place is in the history books and in the Barnum Museum, not in the modern world where circuses teach children that exploitation of sentient creatures is okay as long as it entertains us.

HB 5123 provides needed protection for certain animals such as camels, elephants and tigers by removing them from traveling entertainment shows such as circuses. It has been well documented that animals in traveling shows are trained using inhumane practices and the USDA does not offer the necessary oversight and protection required to keep them safe.

I thank the Environment Committee for raising HB 5123 and for the opportunity to share my views in support of passing HB5123.

Thank you,  
Christine Kaminski  
449 Ezra St  
Bridgeport, CT 06606

**Name:** Andrea Kerin

**Title:** Connecticut Resident

**Organization or Agency:**

**Topic:** HB05123 - AAC THE USE OF CERTAIN ANIMALS IN TRAVELING ANIMAL ACTS.  
Supports

**Testimony:**

Dear Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

I am a Connecticut resident and I am submitting this testimony to express my strong support for H.B. 5123, an act concerning the use of certain animals in traveling animal acts.

Wild animals live complex and emotionally rich lives in their natural environment where they can engage in their innate behaviors. Animals in traveling acts face a bleak existence, one where they are subjected to beatings, psychological torment, and perpetual isolation. They are deprived of their liberty, forced to live in cages and trailers, and prohibited from moving about freely or engaging in any behavior that is natural to them.

The public is growing more broadly cognizant of these realities, and taking the public's lead on this issue, states across the nation are moving to prevent circuses and other traveling animal acts from exploiting animals. California, New Jersey, Hawaii, New York, Illinois, and over 100 cities have passed outright bans or restrictions on the use of wild animals in traveling acts. It's time for Connecticut to join these states and cities and ban the use of wild animals in traveling exhibits and shows. This is an urgently needed step to help protect elephants, nonhuman primates, and other wild animals from human-caused harm.

Please support HB 5123.

**Statement of Karen Laski, Advisory Board, CT Votes for Animals, in Support of HB 5123 - Environment Committee, February 27, 2023.**

Honorable members of Environment Committee, my name is Karen Laski and I'm on the Advisory Board representing CT Votes for Animals, an organization with almost 7000 supporters across Connecticut; CVA strongly supports passage of House Bill 5123 "An Act Concerning the Use of Certain Animals in Traveling Acts"

I have been documenting animals in traveling shows for over 30 years and working on legislation similar to 5123 since 2005.

There is no question that animal acts are a cruel and unnecessary business. Elephants for example, can't even take an essential mud bath as they are hosed down to look clean and any dust is blown off of them. Wild animals need to walk and run which they need for proper digestion, exercise and psychological well-being. Being shackled and caged causes animals to develop neurotic behaviors like pacing, head bobbing, self-mutilation, depression and aggression that can end up dangerous for humans. There have been many incidents of wild animals injuring trainers or spectators because they were traumatized.

You can't train a wild animal with positive reinforcement so they are beaten until they are broken. This intimidation continues as long as the animals are used, often for many decades. In CT, I witnessed a baby elephant being traumatized so she wouldn't defecate right there and not in the ring during the show. I saw a llama resisting being loaded into a truck and the circus trainer had an object he stuck it into the llama's vagina and she bolted forward. Katie, a pygmy hippo spent 23 years in a nook in the back of a truck or taking a step down to a bucket of water in which she could not submerge.

I have two videos available to watch that I filmed and narrated.

<https://youtu.be/R41pSlAegIM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JymEZe3LdBE> Wild animals in traveling shows suffer emotionally and physically and often die a miserable death from an untreated, long standing ailment.

What do children learn from these displays of insensitivity, like watching bears ride horses at the Guildford Fair. They learn that bullying an innocent animal is entertainment and legal in CT.

Many schools, churches, charities and businesses in CT have agreed not to host animal acts. Goodyear Tire, the Red Cross, Western CT State University, Manchester school district and Manchester Community Technical College, Danbury Ice Palace have said no to animal acts as well. Bristol Commons, storeowners witness the cruelty of an elephant from Commerford Zoo, chained and spending her life in truck and were told that a giraffe had died at the same Zoo from the constant neck bend due to confinement. The Commons banned these acts. Another giraffe is currently confined at Commerfords along with Minnie an elephant who had been exploited for 50 years. Many other exotic animals including a kangaroo are despondent there.

Although there are hundreds of USDA violations against circuses and the Commerford traveling zoo, the regulations are extremely weak. A rusty lock on an animal's cage is considered an offense but forcing an animal to be deprived of her nature and be miserable for decades is not reprimanded. We are hopeful that this committee will change that to reflect the moral judgement of the majority of CT residents.

Thank you. Karen