

Statement of

Jo-Anne Basile, Executive Director

CT Votes for Animals

Before the Judiciary Committee

In Support of HB 6714, An Act Concerning Animal Cruelty

March 1, 2023

Chairmen Senator Winfield and Representative Stafstrom, Vice Chairs Senator Flexer and Representative Quinn, Ranking Senator Kissel and Representative Fishbein, Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee

CT Votes for Animals is a grass roots animal advocacy organization. CVA is dedicated to improving and protecting the lives of all CT animals by championing legislative changes at the CT General Assembly and mobilizing animal supporters in every legislative district of the state.

CVA strongly supports HB 6714, AAC Animal Cruelty. The bill targets three areas of Connecticut law that are either deficient or are needed to combat CT's animal cruelty.

HB 6714 updates and strengthens CT's sexual assault law concerning animals. Currently CT's statute is ill defined making it ineffective to be used in cases of bestiality. You will hear testimony about situations in Connecticut where there was animal sexual assault but the Courts were unable to move forward with charges because of the deficiency of CT's law. HB 6714 offers a contemporary update to the definition of sexual assault with an animal to reflect the situations we know occur. The proposed language also addresses situations of pornography concerning sexual contact with an animal.

Attached to my testimony are pages from "Beast forum" an online solicitation and meet up site for those interested in sex with animals. Even though the information dates to 2009, it demonstrates how pervasive this crime is throughout the State. And even though it is dated the crimes have not gone away they have just gone underground into the dark web.

Some examples of chatter from site include:

East of New Haven: "What experience you have - have licked and touched a male K9 but want more"

Agwam and Enfield: "Do i have animals? I dont but my sex partner is my friends dogs Jacob. What experience? I have had sex with Jacob for around 7 years now and have been active in zoophilia since i was younger"

Southeastern CT: "Meet with women for first bestiality experience. Looking for any animal with a vagina that I can stick my dick in. Dog, Horse, sheep, whatever."

Animal sexual abuse happens far more often than most of us realize: According to the American Academy of Psychiatry and Law

- The number of bestiality-related arrests has risen by nearly 800% since 2000
- Every U.S. state has reported incidents of animal sexual abuse
- It occurs as often in large cities as it does in rural areas¹

The updated language on sexual assault in HB 6714 is greatly needed. It will greatly improve the ability of prosecutors to charge those who sexually assault an animal appropriately.

Section 7 of the bill will impose a ban on possessing animals for those convicted of animal abuse and having sexual contact with an animal. The new language will prohibit those convicted of animal cruelty or sexual abuse from possessing or working with animals for a period of five years from the date of conviction or release from imprisonment for the offense, whichever is later.

Possession bans are one way to keep offenders away from potential new victims. It also helps reduce the rate of recidivism often found in animal cruelty cases. An important element to these bans is to remove access to animals not only in the home but in places of work or volunteering, such as animal shelters. Understanding the disdain for registries, the bill provides a vehicle to make the information only available to select law enforcement, including animal control.

Lastly, Section Six of the bill mandates veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to appropriate law enforcement. In instances of suspected cruelty associated with animal fighting, the bill allows reporting to be done anonymously. It further provides civil liability protection for reporting cases. CT Votes for Animals believes it is crucial the law empower veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty when they encounter signs of abuse in their practice. Not only are veterinarians often the only witnesses to animal abuse, but they are uniquely qualified to identify the signs of cruelty.

The mandatory reporting requirement is not dissimilar to mandatory reporters for children. Currently CT is only one of 13 states that has no veterinary reporting system for suspected cruelty.

¹ Edwards MJ. Arrest and Prosecution of Animal Sex Abuse (Bestiality) Offenders in the U.S., 1975-2015. J Amer Acad Psychiatry and Law, 2019

The three provisions contained in HB 6417 offer a trio of measures directed at combatting animal cruelty. Each year the Animal Legal Defense Fund ranks all 50 states on their efforts to protect animals. The 2022 US States Animal Protection Laws Ranking shows that rather than rising, CT's ranking is falling. For those of us who work hard to see that good policies are put in place to keep animals safe, this is discouraging news. CT now hovers in the lower third of all states. Passage of HB 6417 will raise CT's standards and more importantly provide the necessary legal protections for CT's animals.

CT Votes for Animals wants to thank Representative Dorinda Borer and Representative Craig Fishbein for bringing this bill to the legislature. We strongly encourage the Committee pass HB 6714.

Thank you for your consideration.



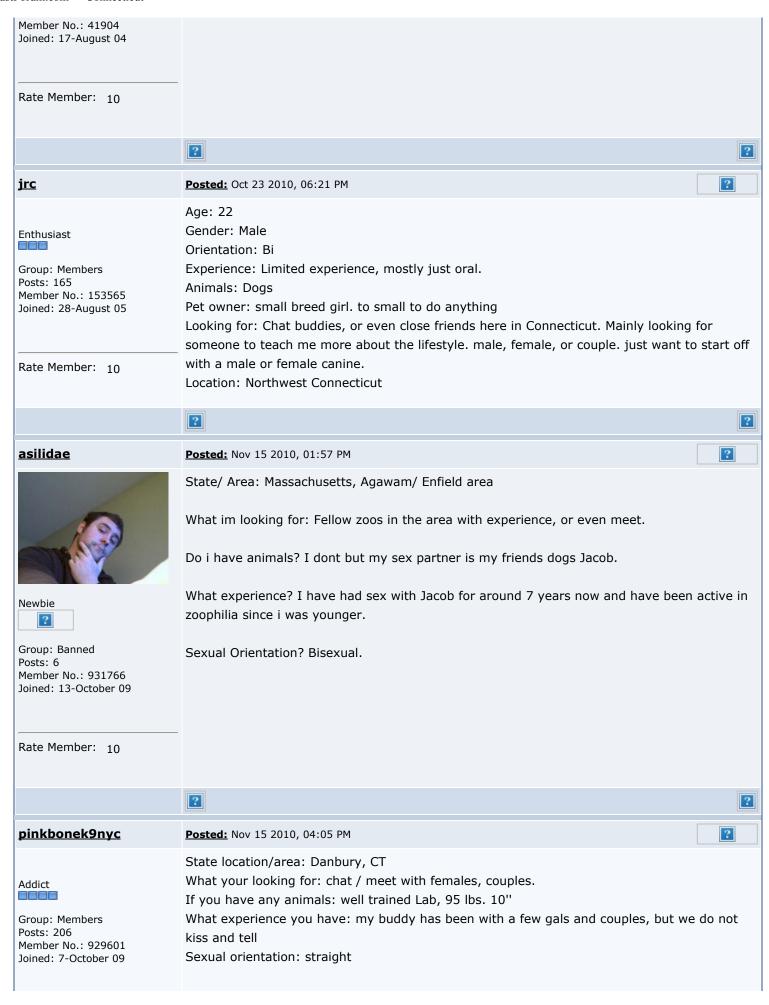
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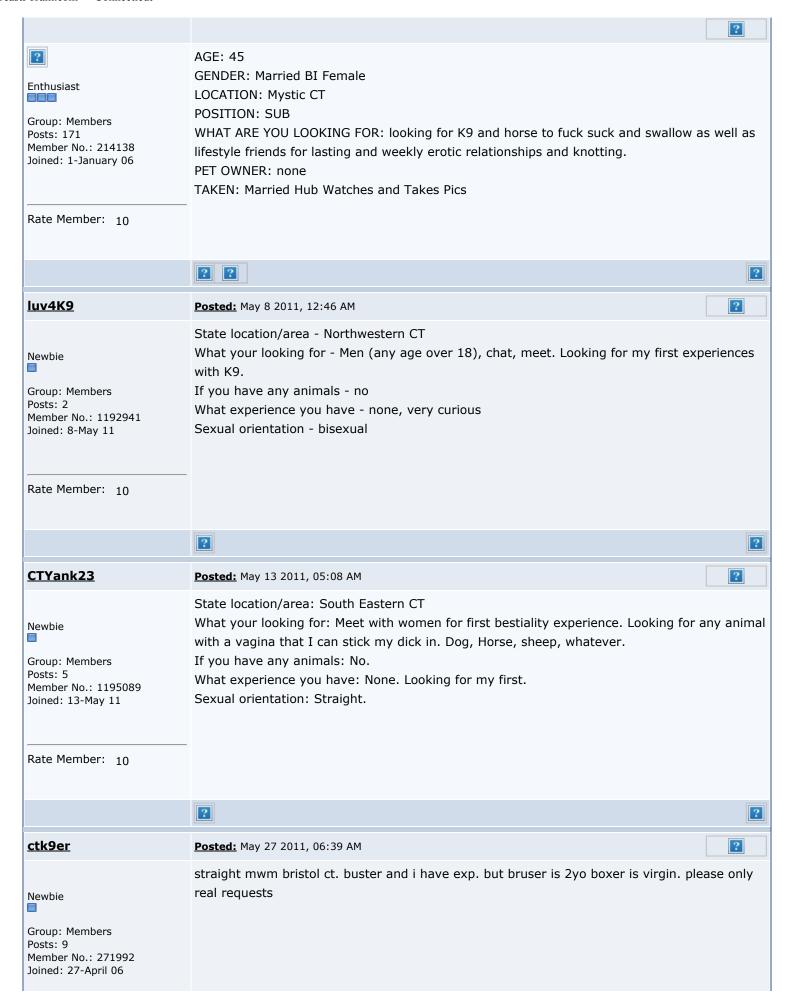


Newbie

If you have any animals: none Group: Members What experience you have: none Posts: 10 Sexual orientation: bi-curious Member No.: 856290 Joined: 29-March 09 This post has been edited by kirby06324 on Oct 16 2010, 02:38 PM Rate Member: 10 ? ? ? fenrir8u Posted: Oct 18 2010, 12:26 AM State location/area: Bristol area, CT What your looking for: chat, meets, male or female, animals or human Newbie If you have any animals: none Group: Members What experience you have: played with male and female dogs Posts: 20 Sexual orientation: bi Member No.: 1106198 Joined: 12-October 10 Rate Member: 10 ? ? Neonblackstar6 Posted: Oct 18 2010, 05:16 PM ? State location/area: New London area, CT What your looking for: chat with females, meets with females, female or male animals. No interest in chatting with men, sorry. If you have any animals: none What experience you have: played with male and female dogs, nothing more than being licked. Sexual orientation: straight Enthusiast I am but flesh, and flesh is the weakness. Group: Members Posts: 158 Member No.: 52987 Joined: 4-October 04 Rate Member: 10 ? ? ctshur4fun Posted: Oct 19 2010, 01:08 PM South east CT No animals Newbie Bi Dogs, horses Group: Members Posts: 25







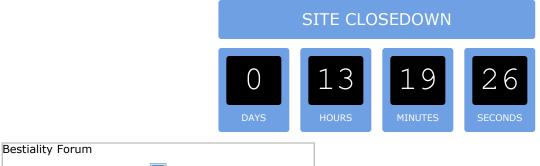


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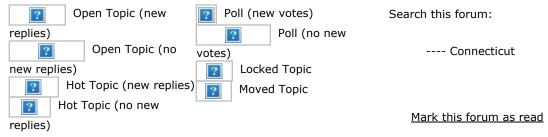
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	Topic Title	Topic Starter	Replies	Views	Last Action
?	Looking For Others In Mystic Area	<u>ctshur4fun</u>	<u>1</u>	124	4th October 2018 - 11:57 AM Last Post by: HorseLover07
?	Human Pup/sub Needs To Be Breed!	Bitchboy123	<u>1</u>	146	29th September 2018 - 01:09 PM Last Post by: Bitchboy123
?	25 Bi Male Looking For A Top. Please?	Onetheonly	<u>0</u>	111	1st August 2018 - 11:18 PM Last Post by: Onetheonly
2	My Two Intact Males(non-owners - keep Moving) Two male German Shepherds for owners	<u>haillin</u>	<u>1</u>	262	31st July 2018 - 05:26 PM Last Post by: Gay4horsesanddogs
?	Looking For Female	67chevy	<u>2</u>	210	10th July 2018 - 06:49 PM Last Post by: hotrod01580
?	Guy Looking For Girl Guy looking for girl	piptwo	<u>2</u>	121	6th July 2018 - 11:16 AM Last Post by: piptwo
?	Ct M Seeking F Into K9 Looking to meet local females	BEAVRSEEKR	<u>0</u>	93	29th June 2018 - 03:39 PM Last Post by: BEAVRSEEKR
?	Northwest Corner (Pages 1 2) Anyone in the NW corner of ct?	<u>jrc</u>	<u>16</u>	864	16th June 2018 - 10:22 AM Last Post by: rottynme
?	Young Dane Needing Love Male dane pup searching for future fun	<u>rottynme</u>	2	250	16th June 2018 - 09:29 AM Last Post by: rottynme
?	Looking To Adopt A Male Dog iSO male dog	lilkitty1987	1	188	12th June 2018 - 10:02 AM Last Post by: arrow429
?	Bi White Male/29yo	CTBeast	<u>0</u>	100	11th June 2018 - 08:13 PM Last Post by: CTBeast
2	Gwm "near" Winsted Ct	zebra bark	Z	518	2nd June 2018 - 03:11 AM Last Post by: Onetheonly
?	Anyone Ever Have Luck Here, At All? Is this wishful thinking, or possible?	Onetheonly	<u>6</u>	293	2nd June 2018 - 03:08 AM Last Post by: Onetheonly
?	Looking For A Bitch To Have Fun With!	Bitchboy123	<u>0</u>	96	31st May 2018 - 06:59 PM Last Post by: Bitchboy123

?	Looking For Dog Owner And Dog Fun Time	MoonStory	<u>0</u>	149	27th May 2018 - 09:54 PM Last Post by: MoonStory		
?	Dog Knot? Guy looking for girl to knot.	beastboyct21	<u>0</u>	131	24th May 2018 - 09:45 PM Last Post by: beastboyct21		
?	Very Passable Crossdresser Looking	<u>LeiaSexySubCDinCT</u>	<u>4</u>	342	15th May 2018 - 03:49 AM Last Post by: MARKOCHAIN		
?	Any Fellow Zoos On Mass Or Northern Ct?	<u>asilidae</u>	<u>14</u>	794	29th April 2018 - 12:41 AM <u>Last Post by:</u> man1973		
?	Connecticut (Pages <u>1 2 3</u>) Roll call	k9boy3	<u>33</u>	2453	21st April 2018 - 09:44 AM Last Post by: mattnorse		
?	Women's Roll Call Single women only!	Dalmation101	<u>0</u>	115	19th April 2018 - 10:08 PM Last Post by: Dalmation101		
?	Two Young Guys Looking For Experience	<u>Startrain</u>	1	171	6th April 2018 - 12:03 PM Last Post by: HorseLover07		
?	New Bill Closes Down Craigslist Personals. Well shit	<u>Onetheonly</u>	<u>0</u>	145	5th April 2018 - 11:26 PM Last Post by: Onetheonly		
?	Looking For A Guy Friend. Sort of friend with benefits?	Onetheonly	1	189	5th April 2018 - 10:12 PM Last Post by: Onetheonly		
?	Still Searching For New Experience	<u>bh0294</u>	<u>3</u>	155	5th April 2018 - 09:28 PM Last Post by: Onetheonly		
?	Ct Dead? Seems inactive here.	<u>Onetheonly</u>	1	94	24th March 2018 - 12:22 PM Last Post by: HorseLover07		
1 User(s) are browsing this forum (1 Guests and 0 Anonymous Users)							
0 Members:							
Showing 25 of 437 topics sorted by last post date in descending order from the beginning							

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In Support of HB 6714 An Act Concerning Cruelty to Animals Before the Judiciary Committee

March 1, 2023

Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am Dr. Virginia Maxwell, Professor in the Forensic Science Department and Henry C. Lee Endowed Chair in Forensic Science at the University of New Haven, and board member of Connecticut Votes for Animals. As a professor I teach classes in the Forensic Investigation of Animal Cruelty, I guest lecture on topics related to animal cruelty, I have written book chapters and articles about animal cruelty, and I have recently co-authored a textbook entitled Investigating Animal Abuse Crime Scenes (publication date May 2023). I have approximately 30 years of experience in Forensic Science, including 15 years at the State of Connecticut Forensic Science Laboratory. I consider that I am well versed in the issues of Animal Cruelty. I would like to offer testimony in support of HB 6714 An Act Concerning Cruelty to Animals. Please note that the opinions expressed herein are my own and may not represent the opinions of the University of New Haven.

HB6714 seeks to expand the definition of sexual assault of animals; to require a ban on possessing animals for those convicted of animal cruelty; and introduce a mandatory requirement for veterinarians to report cases of suspected cruelty to animals. These are all important steps forward in animal protection, and indeed public safety, and I would like to briefly address some of these issues.

Bestiality is a heinous crime involving sexual contact between humans and animals by acts to which an animal is not able to give consent. Indeed, in most cases the animals are subdued using sedatives, a blow to the head, or by restraint on a device designed for that purpose. In other cases, the animals are submissive as a learned behavior through training. I will spare the committee the more graphic details related to this crime. What is very important to consider is that those individuals who indulge in bestiality have a high rate of crossover to sexual crimes against humans, especially children. Indeed, there are numerous cases in which children were forced into acts of bestiality so that it could be filmed by the adult offender for the production of pornography. Further, animal pornography is used to groom children for sexual behavior, and 11% of those convicted of bestiality have prior convictions for child pornography possession¹. By expanding the definition of sexual assault of animals, we are making progress towards addressing this heinous, and often secret, crime and protecting vulnerable humans.

Thirty-nine states³ have already enacted possession bans for those convicted of animal cruelty. Connecticut is one of only two states in the Northeast, New Jersey being the other, that does not have a law preventing ownership of animals by those convicted to felony animal cruelty. Bans range in scope from five-year bans for first offenders to lifetime bans for repeat offenders. Recidivism is very common among those who are cruel to animals and reaches 100%

for some types of animal cruelty such as hoarding. It is clear form their actions that these people do not value the life of an animal and will continue to act in this way until removed from the objects of their abuse. Enacting a possession ban in Connecticut will provide much needed protection for animals in this state but will also preserve public resources that might otherwise be used to investigate and address repeat offenses by animal abusers.

As of 2022, only 14 states² had no laws that allow or require veterinary reporting of animal cruelty. Without a doubt, veterinarians and other veterinary professionals play a critical role in the investigation of animal cruelty because in their professional capacity they can see and recognize victims of animal cruelty, and by introduction of a clear reporting mechanism, prevent future harm. The link between human violence and animal cruelty is well documented¹, and a history of animal cruelty is a predictor of current and future violence directed against people, indeed, in sexual assault, a history of animal cruelty is a best predictor than previous convictions for homicide, firearms offenses or arson¹. The connection between human violence and animal cruelty clearly shows that animal cruelty is a problem affecting more than just animals and emphasizes the importance of reporting instances of animal cruelty and punishing those who are responsible. It is an important mechanism by which early intervention of violent behavior can occur and, through mandatory cross-reporting with welfare service, by which we can protect vulnerable people.

It is equally important that veterinarians report all types of suspected abuse, including neglect, and not restricted to only considering cases of aggravated cruelty. While neglect is thought of as being a crime of omission, the effects of long-term neglect cause no less pain, suffering and distress as other more obvious forms of cruelty. It is not a benign form of animal abuse. I also support the inclusion of the provision of anonymous reporting in the case of suspected dog fighting. If we require our veterinarians to report animal cruelty, we must also protect them.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support and strengthen laws pertaining to animal cruelty by supporting HB 6714.

References:

- 1. The National Link Coalition https://nationallinkcoalition.org
- 2. Michigan State University Animal and Legal and Historical Center 2022 https://www.animallaw.info/content/map-veterinary-reporting-laws-animal-cruelty
- 3. Michigan State University Animal and Legal and Historical Center 2023 https://www.animallaw.info/content/anti-cruelty-laws-restrain-future-ownership-animals

Name: Karen Laski

Title: Advisory Board Member

Organization or Agency: CT Votes for Animals **Topic:** HB06714 - AAC CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

Supports

Testimony:

Honorable Judiciary Committee Members,

I strongly support the expansion of Court Advocacy for Animals in Proceedings for Animal Welfare SB 1060. So many times cruelty cases are dismissed. We will induce more compassion in CT by passing this bill. I also support House Bill 6714 An Act Concerning Cruelty to Animals for the same reasons.

Thank you, Karen Laski