

Roberta DiMezza

From: Danielle Rubin <skyesaluki@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 24, 2025 9:50 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Opposition to H.5926 – A Risky Change to Animal Liability Laws

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing as a concerned Rhode Island resident to express my strong opposition to H.5926. While I fully support compassionate treatment of animals, this bill would create serious legal and economic consequences by allowing pet owners to sue for non-economic damages, such as emotional distress and loss of companionship.

H.5926 would represent a radical shift in legal precedent by treating animals as legal equals to family members. This is not only a departure from longstanding law, but it also introduces numerous complications:

- **Breaks Legal Precedent:** Emotional damages have only ever been awarded to human relationships, such as between spouses or children. Extending this to animals undermines that foundation.
- **Unintended Harm to Animals:** The fear of lawsuits could discourage veterinarians from taking necessary risks in treatment, or drive up costs, reducing access to care. It could also create legal gray areas around “consent” in animal treatment.
- **Legal Confusion and Court Overload:** The emotional nature of these claims could overwhelm our court system, benefiting only lawyers while doing little to improve actual animal welfare.
- **Risks to Farmers and Pet Industries:** Elevating animals to near-human legal status sets a dangerous precedent for future lawsuits against livestock farmers, breeders, and animal service providers—threatening Rhode Island’s economy and food security.

This bill does nothing to improve existing protections for animals and instead opens the door to unnecessary litigation and unintended harm. I urge you to reject H.5926 and protect the integrity of our legal system, veterinary care, and essential animal industries.

Sincerely,
Danielle Rubin, 3137 Diamond Hill Rd, Cumberland RI 02864