

TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT BILL H5926

My name is Emmalyn Araujo. You may know my sister (Grace) and I from the Princess Freckles story that has been circling social media for a few months now. We watched my dog suffer needlessly for a long time, and did everything we could to make her comfortable and to put her at ease that she would be okay.

When I found out that she died because a veterinarian - who takes an oath to keep our dogs safe and healthy - left surgical materials inside her abdomen. My first thought was, 'how could someone do something like this?' The pain of losing her follows me constantly and my sister and I are haunted by this every time our other pets have a regularly scheduled vet visit.

My dog(s) and all of our pets, mean more than anything to me; they are my whole heart. My sister was so bonded with Princess Freckles, she has a hard time even talking about her without crying. Dogs and cats are some people's whole life. Why are they valued as nothing in the law? My family and I are currently fighting to change the value of companion animals in the court of law because it doesn't make sense on an emotional level or a logical one.

Animals are worth something, *not* worth nothing; which means that they absolutely deserve a value, even though it could never be enough. The average dog owner spends about \$20,000 - \$50,000 on their dog, in the dog's lifetime. Animals can't advocate for themselves, so we have to do it for them. This world is a much better place with them in it.

We must protect them at all costs. They have value in our families and in our society, and in our hearts, which is why they *need* to have value in our court of law.

-Emmalyn M. Araujo (15) Grace E. Araujo (14)