

TESTIMONY for support of H5926 (Noret)

My name is Kristen Breton but you may also know me as Princess Freckles mom. The story of Princess Freckles was recently in the news exposing the horrific death she suffered from medical negligence as a result of a surgical procedure, where a medical professional left surgical materials inside of her, resulting in a slow and painful death. The worst part of losing her, was having to tell my daughters the gruesome details of **why** we had to let her go at just 3 years old.

I am representing this bill on behalf of all of the animals (specifically companion animals; cats and dogs we know as our pets) who are owned by about 80% of your voters and constituents, who are advocating for you to accept and push this Bill forward. (My one disclaimer for this bill is that it is NOT about blame.)

This bill IS however, a non-partisan acknowledgement of pets and their owners, it's about protection of those who are the most vulnerable from neglect and harm, and this bill very clearly has a message to those responsible for our pet care...suggesting "**there are standards of care you need to abide by to ensure the safety of our animals.**" While this should be assumed, it clearly has not been as we know there are incidents in our state where negligence has led to the destruction of some pets. This bill adds a reasonable layer of protection for RI families who invest in their pets, both with financial and emotional commitments by putting forth basic and assumed trust into said caretakers (whether medical or professional services.)

This Bill is not the first of its kind in this country, as other states have similar provisions, specifically TN has a law that values pets at \$5,000. This bill is very modest and simply puts RI at the "head of the pack" in New England, wisely acknowledging that not only do our pets have a placement of value in our families, but that animal caretakers have a level of accountability that sets the bar in a decent position to prevent acts of negligence or cruelty. **Animal services are a billion-dollar industry, and it is more than reasonable that a \$7500 parameter as a deterrent from negligence is worth negating, when we all know there is no price tag we can put on any of our pets.**

In conclusion, supporting this bill on behalf of all animals who have lost their lives or were compromised by poor care, and on behalf of all Rhode Islanders who own pets and trust the pet services industry, and on behalf of myself and my girls...we thank you for and taking on the legislative responsibilities of creating better guardrails against animal cruelty and passing forth this bill.

-Kristen E. Breton