



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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March 14, 2008

Judge Joseph W. Doherty
Superior Court
131 North Main Street
Bristol, CT 06010

Dear Judge Doherty,

I am writing to you concerning Mr. Severino Cruz who has requested leniency from the court in his case involving cruelty to animals. Specifically he is accused of drilling holes into his pit bulls' head while she was conscious and restrained. As I understand it, his child was handling her puppy and she bit the child. As we all know children need direction when handling fragile babies, and I would wonder at the circumstances that lead this family pet to bite in this situation.

As the Vice Chair of the Government Administration and Election Committee of the CT General Assembly, I have a responsibility for legislation involving ethics and as the Chairman of the Task Force on Animal Abuse and the Circle of Violence that was recently created by the Speaker of the House, Jim Amann, I have a true vested interest in acts of animal cruelty in our State.

The FBI uses animal abuse as one of four indicators of future violent behavior and we are all familiar with the stories about people who have abused animals and then escalated that abuse to children and/or domestic partners. In fact, I introduced a bill that became law in our last Session that allows judges to extend restraining orders to the pets of domestic violence victims. I am also the legislator responsible for the bill that allows judges to order animal abusers into counseling at their own expense.

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In this instance, Judge Doherty, I would hope that you take into consideration the sheer violence of the act perpetrated on that animal, who was more than likely protecting her baby. I believe a hefty fine and some jail time would be appropriate and clearly this man also needs counseling. By allowing people to get away with this behavior with the proverbial slap on the wrist of accelerated rehabilitation we are not recognizing the red flag that this kind of behavior raises. What Mr. Severino did is a completely inappropriate response to a situation that could have been used to teach his children and I truly wonder what his children will think is normal behavior towards those weaker than themselves.

I thank you for your time and I am available at your convenience for questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diana Urban', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Diana Urban
State Representative