

# The Connecticut General Assembly



For IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 12, 2016

Contact: Tess Koenigsmark  
860-240-8790

## Rep. Urban Welcomes Animal Therapy Dogs, Handlers to Capitol

*'Animal Therapy Day' highlights benefits of therapy animals*

**Committee on Children House Chair Diana Urban** (D-Stonington) welcomed a dozen animal therapy dogs and their handlers to the Capitol today for 'Animal Therapy Day.' Members of three statewide organizations brought dogs to the event: Allan's Angels, K9 First Responders, and Tails of Joy.

The event raised awareness of the important role therapy animals play during times of trauma and crisis. The Committee on Children recently voted in favor of HB 5140, which would allow the use of therapy animals to provide comfort to children who are testifying in certain criminal prosecutions.

"It is amazing when you watch a child struggling with school cuddled into a therapy dog and reading with confidence. Or a child victim of trauma hugging a therapy dog and whispering problems that need to be shared. These incredible dogs and their handlers do all this on a volunteer basis," said **Rep. Urban**. "The stress they alleviate and the hearts they warm are countless. I am proud that the Committee on Children has been a leader in promoting our Connecticut volunteer teams and the excellent work they do."

In 2013, legislation originating in the Committee on Children creating a statewide animal therapy program under the auspices of the Department of Children and Families was passed into law. Similarly, in 2015, Children's Committee legislation was passed allowing the use of therapy animals other than dogs.

###