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Celebrating 29 Years of Empowering Women

May 8, 2017

Honorable Gary Peters
Hart Senate Office Building
Suite 724
Washington DC 20510
Fax: (202) 224-7387

RE: S 322 Pet and Women Safety Act of 2017 (Peters) - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Peters,

On behalf of the Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee (SBWPC), I am writing to express support for S 322, addressing legislation to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets. SBWPC's mission is dedicated to furthering gender equality and other feminist values through political and social action and educational activities, and is one of the largest women's political committees in Santa Barbara County. We advocate for a diverse set of positions that include "ending crimes perpetuated against women that have at their root an intersection between sexism and other forms of oppression," (<http://sbwpc.org/positions-new/>) including abusing women's pets as a source of control.

SBWPC believes that women should not have to make a decision between finding safety for themselves or staying behind to protect their pets, and therefore, we support amending the federal criminal code to broaden the definition of stalking to include conduct that causes a person to experience a reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury to her or his pet. Because SBWPC endorses a feminist approach to the humane treatment of all living beings, we also agree with S 322 that grants should be awarded to emergency and transitional shelters to provide assistance to survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and/or stalking - and their pets. Since January 1, 2016, the FBI has been collecting statistical data tracking acts of cruelty against animals because research indicates a correlation between animal cruelty and sexual and domestic violence, child abuse, and murder. In fact, cruelty to animals is considered to be a significant predictor of future violence. Research has found that a perpetrator's first target is often an animal; the second is a spouse, girlfriend, acquaintance, or a child (<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/-tracking-animal-cruelty>).

Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee regards S 322 as an important step forward in helping to eliminate the unconscionable "crimes against women and their pets found in our families, the media, in our schoolyards and college campuses, and in our workplaces."

Thank you for reviewing our organization's position on this issue. Should you wish to communicate further with us, please email us at info@sbwpc.org or visit our website: www.sbwpc.org.

Sincerely,

Catherine Swysen, President SBWPC

cc: Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Senate Committee, Chair Pat Roberts, (202) 224-3514
cc: Santa Barbara Rape Crisis Center, email: karla@sbrcc.net
cc: marylizzkelleher@mail.house.gov (Congresswoman Clark)

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Celebrating 29 Years of Empowering Women

May10, 2017

Honorable Diane Feinstein
Hart Senate Office Building
Suite 331
Washington DC 20510

RE: S 322 Pet and Women Safety Act of 2017 (Peters) – SUPPORT/COSPONSOR

Dear Senator Feinstein,

On behalf of the Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee (SBWPC), I am writing to express support for S 322, addressing legislation to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets. SBWPC's mission is dedicated to furthering gender equality and other feminist values through political and social action and educational activities, and is one of the largest women's political committees in Santa Barbara County. We advocate for a diverse set of positions that include "ending crimes perpetuated against women that have at their root an intersection between sexism and other forms of oppression," (<http://sbwpc.org/positions-new/>) including abusing women's pets as a source of control.

SBWPC believes that women should not have to make a decision between finding safety for themselves or staying behind to protect their pets, and therefore, we support amending the federal criminal code to broaden the definition of stalking to include conduct that causes a person to experience a reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury to her or his pet. Because SBWPC endorses a feminist approach to the humane treatment of all living beings, we also agree with S 322 that grants should be awarded to emergency and transitional shelters to provide assistance to survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and/or stalking - and their pets. Since January 1, 2016, the FBI has been collecting statistical data tracking acts of cruelty against animals because research indicates a correlation between animal cruelty and sexual and domestic violence, child abuse, and murder. In fact, cruelty to animals is considered to be a significant predictor of future violence. Research has found that a perpetrator's first target is often an animal; the second is a spouse, girlfriend, acquaintance, or a child (<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/-tracking-animal-cruelty>).

Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee regards S 322 as an important step forward in helping to eliminate the unconscionable "crimes against women and their pets found in our families, the media, in our schoolyards and college campuses, and in our workplaces." **We therefore urge you to sign on as a cosponsor of S 322.**

Thank you for reviewing our organization's position on this issue. Should you wish to communicate further with us, please email us at info@sbwpc.org or visit our website: www.sbwpc.org.

Sincerely,

Catherine Swysen, President SBWPC

cc: Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Senate Committee, Chair Pat Roberts, Fax: (202) 2282125
cc: Santa Barbara Rape Crisis Center, email: karla@sbrcc.net