

# 2021 CVA ADVOCACY WORKSHOP – SPEAKER BIOS

January 30, 2021

## General Session

**Jo-Anne Basile** Jo-Anne was named CVA's first Executive Director in 2017. Prior to that position Jo-Anne was CVA's lobbyist at the State Capitol from 2014-2017 working with CVA members and legislators to successfully bring Desmond's Law and Private Shelter Rules, among other bills, into Connecticut's laws protecting animals. Jo-Anne comes to CVA with a strong legislative resume having served as a Legislative Director for three members of the US Congress and Vice President and lobbyist for a premier national telecommunications association in Washington D.C. Contact: [info@ctvotesforanimals.org](mailto:info@ctvotesforanimals.org)

**Jessica Rubin, CVA Board President** is a law professor at UConn Law School and is the Director of UConn's Legal Practice program. Professor Rubin teaches Animal Law – a field in which she is a widely recognized expert. Professor Rubin was instrumental in creating Desmond's Law, which allows Connecticut courts to appoint advocates – law students under supervision - in animal cruelty cases. She supervises students and appears in court to advocate for justice in cases of animal cruelty.

**Joe Grabarz** is a partner in Gallo & Robinson LLC, a well-established lobbying firm. Joe is a former state representative from Bridgeport who now has been representing a variety of non-profit organizations for over a decade. Joe Grabarz is also a member of CVA's Advisory Committee.

**State Representative Dorinda Borer** is currently the House Chair of the Environment Committee. She has represented West Haven's 115th state district since 2017. Since arriving in Hartford, Representative Borer has served on the Environment Committee and has been a strong advocate for humane animal legislation and policies. Contact: <http://www2.housedems.ct.gov/InYourOpinion.asp>

## Breakout Session #1: Local Control Over Pet Shops

**State Representative Raghiv Allie-Brennan** was first elected to represent the 2<sup>nd</sup> legislative district in the Connecticut General Assembly on November 6, 2018 and is currently serving his second term. At the start of his first term in 2019, Raghiv was appointed Vice Chair of the Energy & Technology Committee and became Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Clean Energy Caucus. As Vice Chair, Raghiv has helped pass legislation to support the state's largest expansion of offshore wind energy and spearheaded the passage of solar energy legislation, increasing consumer choice and protecting over 2,200 local jobs. Representative Allie-Brennan is sponsor of HB 5794, A bill regarding Municipal Restrictions on Pet Shops. This is the third year that Representative Allie-Brennan has championed legislation to stop the puppy mill

pipeline into Connecticut. Contact:

<http://www2.housedems.ct.gov/InYourOpinion.asp>

**State Representative Jason Doucette** is honored to represent Manchester and Glastonbury in the Connecticut House of Representatives District 13. He serves as Chair of the Banking Committee and is a member of the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee and the Judiciary Committee. Jason is an attorney with the firm of Gagliardi, Doucette & Geraghty.

Jason has a long record of civic and government involvement including serving on the Manchester Board of Directors (Town Council), Workforce Development Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, School Modernization and Revitalization Committee (SMARTR 1), and Redevelopment Agency. He has also served as a law clerk intern for the House Majority Leader at the Connecticut General Assembly while attending law school. Representative Doucette is a sponsor of HB 5974, A bill regarding Municipal Restrictions on Pet Shops. This is the third year Representative Doucette has championed legislation to stop the puppy mill pipeline into Connecticut. Contact:

<http://www2.housedems.ct.gov/InYourOpinion.asp>

**Annie Hornish** is the Connecticut State Director for The Humane Society of the United States, a former Connecticut state representative, and owner of a certified-organic vegetable farm in Suffield. She holds a Bachelor of Science from UConn's College of Agriculture, a certification in cytotechnology, and a Master of Business Administration. Annie can be reached at [ahornish@humanesociety.org](mailto:ahornish@humanesociety.org) or (860) 966-5201.

**Debora Bresch** is the Senior State Director in the Government Relations department of the ASPCA, which she joined in 2001, Debora lobbies for the passage of animal-friendly legislation primarily in Connecticut and New Jersey. She has authored or co-authored many pieces of pro-animal legislation that are now law, including Connecticut and New Jersey bills to regulate sourcing from puppy mills, dog chaining, and animals' access to proper shelter and a New York State budget bill to revive and reconfigure the state's multi-million dollar low-income spay/neuter program. Especially interested in public policy concerning dangerous dogs, Debora co-authored an amicus brief on behalf of the ASPCA concerning the unconstitutionality, negative impact, and ineffectiveness of breed-specific laws. Debora co-founded and is the past president of Connecticut Votes for Animals, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization dedicated to the political advancement of animals. She is a member of the NY Bar and graduated from Columbia College (Columbia University) and New York Law School with honors. Deb can be reached at

[Debora.Bresch@aspc.org](mailto:Debora.Bresch@aspc.org)

**Breakout Session #2: Prohibiting the Use of Wild Animals in Circuses, etc**

**State Senator Will Haskell** was elected in November 2018 to represent the 26th State Senate District. Born in 1996, he is the youngest member of the General Assembly. Sen. Haskell attended the Westport Public Schools and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Georgetown University. After graduating from Georgetown, Sen. Haskell returned to his home town. He decided to run for office with the mission of drawing other recent graduates back to Connecticut. As the Senate Chairman of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, Sen. Haskell is laser-focused on providing businesses with the 21st century workforce they need in order to thrive in Connecticut. With an eye towards Connecticut's future, Sen. Haskell is determined to help build a state that is affordable and appealing to every generation. Senator Haskell is an original sponsor of SB 66 A bill Prohibiting the Use of Wild Animals in Circuses, Carnivals and Exhibitions Contact:

<http://www.senatedems.ct.gov/haskell-contact>

**State Representative Anne Hughes** is a third--term State Representative serving Easton, Weston, and Redding's 135th district. Anne works as a Licensed Master Social Worker for Jewish Senior Services' Institute on Aging and as Coordinator for the Center for Elder Abuse Prevention. She also joined Easton's DTC in 2016 to serve on Easton's Commission on Aging. Anne has devoted herself to public service throughout her life as exemplified by her decision to write a letter to President Nixon at the age of seven requesting him to consider the use of boxing gloves in lieu of semi-automatic rifles for wars. She was the Program Director at CLASP Homes INC, for over a decade which provides support homes for adults with autism and developmental disabilities. Anne co-founded the Norwalk Peacemakers and began The Goddess Faire art collaborative to host annual pop-up neighborhood art and music festivals. Anne is an original sponsor of SB 66 A bill Prohibiting the Use of Wild Animals in Circuses, Carnivals and Exhibitions. Contact:

<http://www2.housedems.ct.gov/InYourOpinion.asp>

**Jill Alibrandi** is from Redding CT and has been an animal advocate working to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses for human entertainment for many years. She has taken countless footage of the abuse that these wild and majestic creatures have suffered at the hands of travelling circuses and local exhibitors, and how they have been slowly stripped of everything that would make their lives meaningful, but have been reduced to nothing more than a shell of what they once were. For the past six years, Jill has volunteered for WildlifeSOS – an international organization that rescues circus/temple elephants and dancing sloth bears-witnessing first hand after rescued how they can live in peace with their own kind.

**Karen Laski** is a longtime activist from Manchester CT and she is on the Board of "CT Votes for Animals". Karen has been protesting and filming circuses since the early nineties, and hosts a group called "Compassion in Entertainment". She also produced a 15 minute documentary on You Tube called "Before you go to the Circus", parts of which were shown on the HBO film, "An Apology to Elephants".

### **Breakout Session #3: Prohibiting the Sale of New Fur Products**

**State Representative David Michel:** Rep. Michel is proud to serve as State Representative for the 146th House District, which is wholly in Stamford, and spans much of the South End neighborhood, Shippan, and downtown. He is determined to advocate on behalf of his constituents to protect the environment and improve Connecticut's economy. Rep. Michel moved to the U.S. from France when he was 14 years old and has lived on Long Island Sound ever since. Representative Michel has been a strong and vocal advocate for the environment and for the humane treatment of animals. Representative Michel serves as the House Chair of the Legislators Animal Advocacy Caucus and in 2019, Representative Michel received CVA's Animal Champion Award. Representative Michel is the original sponsor of HB 5031 An Act Concerning the Sale, Trade or Distribution of New Animal Fur. Contact: <http://www2.housedems.ct.gov/InYourOpinion.asp>

**Liz Garrett and Amy Mallardi:** Liz and Amy are animal activists and founders of Fur Free CT. Fur Free CT was organized to elevate the issues surrounding animal suffering in the fur trade and to champion legislation to end the sale of new fur products. Fur Free CT is one of 8 organizations around the country working to stop the sale of fur products. Amy is also a member of CVA's Advisory Committee. Contact: [Furfreeect@gmail.com](mailto:Furfreeect@gmail.com)

#### **Breakout Session #4: Stopping a Bear Hunt & Humanely Co-existing with Wildlife**

**Nicole Rivard** is the editor in chief at the Friends of Animals and has been there since 2013. Nicole brings 25 years of journalistic experience to the work of FOA as well as legislative outreach. Nicole has been particularly involved in FOA's legislative initiative to ban the import of the Big Six trophy hunts.

**Laura Simon** is a wildlife ecologist and the president of the CT. Wildlife Rehabilitators Association. Laura has been working in wildlife policy for decades running a wildlife hotline for more than 18 years and for a period of time Laura was a wildlife expert with HSUS. Laura is a graduate of Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies with a focus on wildlife policy.