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PRESS RELEASE

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Senator Gobi Attends PAWS II Commission Meeting

BOSTON- Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer) attended the penultimate meeting of the Special Commission on Mandated Reporting of Known or Suspected Animal Cruelty, and abuse of Children, the Elderly, and Disabled Persons today to discuss the recommendations listed in the report with the release date scheduled for later this fall.

Authorized under the the 2018 law that became known as PAWS II, *An Act to Protect Animal Welfare and Safety in Cities and Towns*, the commission was established to study the costs associated with the reporting requirements of known or suspected animal cruelty, and abuse of children, the elderly, and disabled persons. The 2018 law requires animal control officers, and employees from the Department of Children and Families, elder affairs, and investigators for the disabled persons protection commission to report all types of abuse they may witness in the course of their work.

Gobi had this to say on the commission's progress, and goal: "It is well known that there is a direct link between abusers of animals and abusers of children, domestic abuse and elder abuse. Especially during this health pandemic, we know that incidences of violence have also risen. This is an important commission and one I am proud to be a member of."

Chaired by Representative Kay Kahn and Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, the commission is tasked with estimating the potential costs associated with training employees and contractors of the varying departments to recognize the signs of abuse, as well as the the costs associated with a prospective increase in reports of abuse towards these vulnerable groups. The idea in mind is that animal control officers, when reporting to calls about animal neglect, may additionally witness signs of abuse towards these other groups, and vice versa. In such a situation, those officers would have reporting requirements that would hopefully save time and assist these vulnerable populations more expeditiously.

For more information on the commission, please contact Senator Gobi's office by email at Anne.Gobi@MASenate.gov.

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