

Testimony of Mara McDonald
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Regarding:

- **CT HB 5493—“Puppy Lemon Law,” Fines for Pet Stores and Breeding Kennels**
- **CT HB 5798—Dog Tethering and Confinement**
- **CT HB 5808—Rabies Vaccination Certificates (to increase spay/neuter funding**

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, members of the Environment Committee, thank you for this opportunity to comment on bills that are before this committee.

With respect to the Puppy Lemon Law, HB 5493, as both a consumer and a citizen who cares about the welfare of all animals, I plead with you to support this piece of legislation. In doing so, this bill would improve the state’s “puppy lemon law” and institute a fine system for pet stores and kennel, and would hold them accountable for neglect and poor standards of care. It would also provide additional measures to address puppy mills, which are cruel breeding factories that produce the dogs sold in pet stores. This bill would also require that pet shops provide consumers with full information regarding the cats and dogs’ origins. This is important because many pets are sold under the misrepresentation that they are from humane, local breeders. Further this bill would require that pet shops sell animals that are from kennels that are licensed by the USDA and any other appropriate state agency.

I would ask for your support on HB 5798, which would institute an enforceable ban on the unreasonable tethering and confinement of dogs. The current law is very vague and therefore, animal control officers have difficulty enforcing it. As a result, dogs in our state can be chained or confined outside all day and all night. This not only is cruel to the animals but poses a public safety risk, as chained dogs are three times more likely to bite people. Finally, and I speak from experience, as an animal lover, there is nothing more heart-breaking and frustrating than to have your neighbor chain their dog outside, day and night. Neighbors are forced to witnessing these dogs suffer for years and bark constantly from boredom. For the welfare of our animals and the safety of our citizens, I do hope you will support this bill.

Last, I encourage you to support HB 5808—Rabies Vaccination Certificates which would provide additional funding for spay/neuter programs. This bill would allow animal control officers to request a listing from veterinarians of the dogs within their towns who have received a rabies vaccination. With this information animal control officers can more efficiently enforce the current dog licensing law. In our current environment, animal control officers must canvases door- to-door to identify citizens who have unlicensed dogs. Not only will this help enforce the dog licensing law (which is a public safety law) but it will also provide additional funding, that is desperately needed to the state’s animal population control program (APCP), as a portion of the dog licensing fees are deposited into the APCP fund.

I strongly urge you to support these three important bills. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my thoughts with you.