

COMMENTS CONCERNING RAISED BILL NO. 784
AN ACT CONCERNING ROAMING ANIMALS
By Michael Zimmer

Statement of Purpose

To allow animal control officers to impound dogs, whose presence on any public or condominium/PUD property poses a threat to public or condominium or PUD residents' safety or other animals.

Michael Zimmer

I am currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Community Associations Institute - Connecticut Chapter. CAI-CT is the educational and technical assistance entity for community associations and their service providers in Connecticut. I also serve as the President of the 166 unit common interest community in which I live, Meadows of Southington. I have been the president for over thirteen years.

I am submitting my comments, and appearing before the committee, to present my insights into our proposed amendment to the proposed bill will affect the more than 4,000 common interest communities in Connecticut, and the hundreds of thousands of people who live in them.

Statement

I wish to request your full support regarding the proposed Nuisance Dog Bill. As the president of a 166 unit condominium complex in Southington this is an issue that currently places our residents and pets at risk.

I would like to provide you with a real life example of why this bill is critical to associations like ours:

In October, 2008 a dog was let loose on the property and the unit owner would not respond to our attempts to contact her. The dog was obviously distressed by the release and was running in front of cars, was unapproachable, and there was an increasing concern for the safety of other residents because of her nervous nature. Several residents contacted animal control and they were told that nothing could be done because the dog was running loose "on its own property."

After further investigation with her neighbors we discovered that there were domestic issues and her boyfriend was asked to leave. The dog apparently belonged to him so it was set free by the unit owner. This was an act in itself which suggests a lack of good judgment and questions whether or not the family should be caring for anything including a family pet.

The immediate problem is that our association's only possible recourse under state law is to mail a letter of warning and then possibly fine them per day after a hearing that must be scheduled with notice. An uncontrolled animal such as this allowed to run free in a community setting poses an immediate threat to other residents. This immediate threat should not be treated the same way as someone playing their stereo loud or littering in common areas. In addition the safety and security of this animal should be considered. If this same dog was running between homes in any another neighborhood setting it would be picked up by animal control for its own safety as well as the safety of others.

In summary, animal control laws were instituted to protect the safety and security of our state's residents as well as their pets. I am asking that you consider my position that in a common interest ownership situation the unit owner's full rights of unrestricted use are limited already by state law. In a common interest ownership situation each unit owner does not have full and unrestricted access to common areas. Please come to the aid of our residents and pets by allowing them the same protective services enjoyed by individual home owners by expanding the current laws to include common areas of common interest ownership communities.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this issue.

Michael Zimmer, President
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