

Testimony of Caroline K. Gaetano
89 LeMay Street, West Hartford, CT 06107
Connecticut Humane Society – Pet Facilitated Therapy Volunteer
Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary - Volunteer
West Hartford Dog Park Coalition – Fundraising Chairperson

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. As a resident of West Hartford, and lifelong animal advocate, I care deeply about the following bills.

First with respect to **the Puppy Lemon Law, HB 5493**, as a consumer and a citizen who cares about the welfare of animals, I strongly urge you to support this piece of legislation. HB5493 would improve the state’s “puppy lemon law” and institute a fine scheme for pet stores and kennels, which would hold them accountable for neglect and poor standards of care. As a result, pet stores would take care to obtain healthy puppies from licensed breeding kennels. Furthermore, measures should be instituted that require pet shops to provide a documented history containing full information of the cats and dogs’ origins and each party responsible for the animal from birth to purchase (i.e. breeder, broker, transporter, store). This is important because many pets are sold under the misrepresentation that they are from humane breeders. Further, this bill should require that pet shops sell animals only from kennels that are licensed by the USDA and any other appropriate state agency. As other states move to regulate the puppy mills in their states – as Pennsylvania did last year - this requirement would become increasingly meaningful.

I also ask for your support on **HB 5798, which would institute an enforceable ban on the unreasonable tethering and confinement of dogs**. Currently the law that exists is very vague and animal control officers are not able to enforce 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. This bill is intended to improve the welfare of dogs who are chained and live outside in all types of weather – excessive heat or cold or in snow or rain, with limited or no shelter or protection – it is not intended as punitive towards those in housing situations or with limited movement that may require their companion animals to be tethered or on a trolley for short periods to relieve themselves. For the welfare of our animals and the safety of our citizens, I do hope you will support this bill.

Lastly, I encourage your support on **HB 5808—Rabies Vaccination Certificates (to increase spay/neuter funding)**. 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. Information could also be shared between municipalities. Animal control officers could then more efficiently enforce the current dog licensing law. 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 by the state’s animal population control program (APCP), as the APCP fund is chiefly funded by dog licensing fees.

I strongly urge you to support these three important bills. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.