

Testimony of Joel Serota, 121 Tuttle Road, Woodbury, CT March 8, 2010

In opposition to Raised Bill No. 274

An Act Prohibiting the Unreasonable Confinement and Tethering of Dogs.

As many times as I read and re-read this proposed bill I still have to search for its genesis! It raises so many questions as to why this bill is even necessary in the first place? Whom does it benefit? Who does it harm and most puzzling, what is it that you are trying to accomplish? Let me share with you my findings that you, who serve this state, should collectively withdraw this bill now. Here are more than several reasons to do so. Any of which should cause you as legislators to rethink your positions.

Why is this Bill necessary? You are placing yourselves in a position to know what is best for someone else's dog. You are looking to make a determination as to tethering in an unreasonable manner in a confined place primarily based upon square footage and unattended, not within the visual range of the owner. This proposed Bill places an unreasonable burden on the owner to always have to be on site or have a dog sitter on the premises. The concept is just not realistic, but the fines are? Think of the legal rights of owners of the property when drafting legislation? Have you even considered the enforcement of such a law? Consider the legal consequences when someone attempts to make a determination as to square footage or goes on to someone's property to see if the owner is in visual range of the animal. How about in an urban setting with its limited area or the inside of a person's apartment. How do you enforce this Bill? Could you be creating a situation that could result in owners abandoning their dogs to roam the streets? Who is going to pay for this or the litigation the State would surely face when owners of dogs or real property seek to enforce their legal rights? It's an unnecessary bill, unenforceable and financially detrimental to the State based upon potential liability.

Whom does it benefit? Not the dog lover that has and continues to take care of his pet. He knows how his pet should be taken care of inside and outside in a confined enclosure. Certainly not the officials that have to enforce this ill conceived and poorly defined Bill. Not the taxpayers of the State, whose tax dollars will best serve the State in areas that require services.

There is missing language in this Bill that should exempt or exclude a kennel housing a pack of sporting hounds. The very purpose of having such hounds close together in a confined area is the socialization and pack mentality of working together. Although licensed, it is not a commercial kennel. This Bill addresses confined or tethered without consideration to sporting dogs. Again, why such a lack of thought in proposing a Bill that misses key elements that a Bill should have?

What were you trying to accomplish with this Bill? Helping dogs? Then if this is true, why not allow our very able Animal Control officials do what they currently do? They have the authority without this bill to protect dogs and ensure their welfare. This Bill would be a very costly bill and be burdensome to the State, our citizens who own dogs and officials that would have to enforce an unnecessary regulation. I urge you to withdraw this Bill now.

Joel Serota