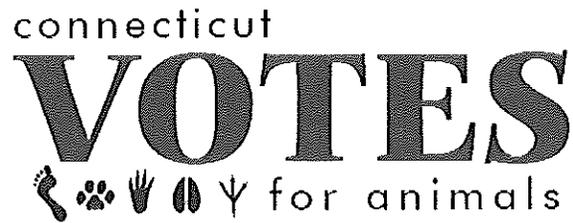


THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS®



**Testimony of Debora M. Bresch, Esq., Senior Director, Government Relations, ASPCA; President, CT Votes for Animals
In Support of Senate Bill 274 – An Act Prohibiting the Unreasonable Confinement and Tethering of Dogs
Joint Environment Committee – March 8, 2010**

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and fellow Environment Committee members, thank you for this opportunity to express the **strong support of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and CT Votes for Animals – and their over 24,000 Connecticut members – for Senate Bill 274.**

In 2003, Connecticut became the first state to attempt to regulate the practice of excessively chaining or confining a dog. Not only is dog chaining inhumane, but chained dogs are also a public safety hazard. Specifically, studies indicate that chaining is associated with dog aggression and biting.¹ In fact, according to one researcher, chained dogs were responsible for 25% (or 109) of U.S. dog bite fatalities from 1965-2008. Of these fatalities, 99 were children who wandered into the reach of a chained dog, and the other 10 were instances in which chained dogs broke free before attacking.²

Unfortunately, Connecticut's cruelty law is insufficient to prevent the inappropriate confinement and chaining of dogs. The cruelty law has no application if the objective is primarily to prevent the endangerment of a dog or the public. However, despite the consequent necessity of Connecticut's dog chaining and confinement law, most animal control officers do not enforce it because they consider its mandate not to tether or confine a dog "for an unreasonable period of time" to be too vague. **SB 274 would ensure enforcement of the dog tethering and confinement law by clarifying the conduct that it prohibits.** Specifically, SB 274 would require that dogs are not tethered in a way that endangers them or prevents their either reaching their food, water, or shelter, or comfortably lying down, sitting, or standing. SB 274 would also require that confined dogs have sufficient space (i.e., 100 square feet for one dog, 50 square feet for each additional dog) – although please note the exemptions from this space requirement:

- kennels licensed under CT General Statutes 22-374,
- commercial kennels, pet shops, training facilities, grooming facilities licensed under CT General Statutes 22-344,
- shelters, and
- pounds.

The ASPCA and CT Votes for Animals have worked closely with Connecticut animal control officers, who have requested amendments to SB 274 that they believe would facilitate the work of ensuring that the public is kept safe and animals are treated humanely. **Most importantly, these amendments would ensure that SB 274 prohibits chaining a dog to a stationary object if the owner or keeper is not outside in the presence of the dog.** In addition, because the objective of SB 274 is to prohibit the constant, inhumane chaining of dogs – not temporary tethering for a lawful purpose – the proposed amendments (in addition to the other exemptions already in the bill) would exempt licensed veterinarians and "exhibitions, shows, contests, or other events in which the skill, breeding, or stamina of the dog is judged or examined."

Please support SB 274 and the amendments proposed by the ASPCA and CT Votes for Animals. This is crucial human legislation that will give needed guidance to Connecticut's animal control officers regarding the state's dog tethering and confinement law, thereby facilitating its enforcement and protecting dogs and the public at large.

¹ Gershman, K., Sacks, J., Wright, J., 1994. Which dogs bite: A case control study of risk factors. *Pediatrics* 93, 913-917.

² New Mexico Department of Public Safety, 2008. The Public Safety and Humane Implications of Persistently Tethering Domestic Dogs. See online at http://www.apnm.org/campaigns/chaining/Final_DPS_Tethering_Study.pdf.