

Raised Bill #274

LCO No. 1554

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I am writing to you concerning the Tethering Bill which is going to be discussed by the Environment Committee. Unfortunately I will not be able to come in person to testify in opposition of this bill.

This bill, as written, will have a severe negative impact on a large number of responsible dog owners and probably very little impact on those owners for which the bill is intended and who probably will just ignore the bill if passed.

Many elderly and disabled people who are your constituents will be seriously harmed by this bill, people who live in communities such as Senior Housing, condos, apartments etc that do not allow fencing of any kind. Because of their age or physical disability they cannot walk their dogs and must put them on a tie out line to go to the bathroom or just get a little exercise. In many cases these dogs are the person's most cherished possession and best friend. If this bill is voted in the affirmative it will end their ability to have their beloved dog. Thus causing them to have to turn the dog over to a shelter and putting an additional burden on the tax payers who support the shelters.

The space required in the bill does not take into consideration the size of the dog and space needed for the individual breeds. The one hundred square footage kenneling as called for in the bill for one dog is way too much for a Chihuahua or other dog in the Toy Group and not enough space for a Great Dane or any other of the giant breeds. The American Kennel Club recognizes over a 165 breeds and varieties of breeds and each has its own requirements. Add to that mixture the number of mixed breeds and you have an even larger number of variables as to what is correct for that particular dog. Another factor that needs to be considered is the individual breed's requirements. Your Nordic breeds such as the Husky (the U Conn Mascot); the Alaskan Malamute etc. thrives in the cold and generally does not do well in heated homes, whereas the Chinese Crested hairless can get sunburned quite quickly if left in the sun and freeze if put out in the Winter without a coat on. Thus what constitutes a reasonable time for one breed is not for another.

The requirements stated in this bill are not realistic as they do not take into account such things as the health of the animal for example: a dog recovering from surgery or illness such as heart worm, must be confined to a crate for several weeks and only walked briefly to go to the bathroom. While on the subject of health, I did not see where veterinary hospitals are excluded. Does this mean that they will not be able to keep sick dogs in their hospitals confined in crates?

Who is going to enforce this bill? Is the state going to increase the number of employees at the Department of Agriculture so that they can enforce this bill? Are you expecting the local towns to bear the burden of having to hire more animal control officers? For that matter, there is no provision for local animal control officers to have any certification or training so how do you expect them to be able to recognize what is appropriate for the individual breeds? Are you leaving the enforcement of this bill up to untrained and uncertified animal control officer to determine if the animal is confined in an unreasonable manner or for an unreasonable time, thus allowing personal opinions, personal prejudices, and total lack of uniformity to occur and could lead to future law suits by the aggrieved owners. Are you expecting the animal control officers to set outside the various dog owners' locales and time how long their dog is tied out? Are you expecting them to have binoculars so that they can see if the owner has full vision of the dog? What about the blind person, must they have someone come over every time they have to put their dog outside to attend to nature to be able to have the dog under someone's vision?

I personally, would never travel with my dogs in the car unless they were crated in a crate that they cannot stand up in for their safety. Should I have an accident I do not want the dog to be thrown around and injured or be thrown out of

the vehicle. Surely you can not object to this as you have passed laws requiring infants and young children to be constrained in car seats for their safety? When I have a puppy, I keep the puppy crated if I am not home for the puppy's well being and that of my house. Many dogs each year are electrocuted by chewing on an electric wire, many families give up their dogs because the dog was teething and chewed up a chair or woodwork or something else. Depending on the breed, many dogs are still teething at 18 months of age and have not outgrown their need to chew until they are much older. The American Kennel Club considers dog a year old and younger to be a puppy.

Your constituents active in the sport of dog sledding keep their dogs tethered together to bond and to pull the sleds. Hunters will frequently tether the dogs so they can get the scent of the prey while waiting for their turn to run in the hunt field. There are many legitimate reasons for tethering a dog which are not cruel.

I did not see any exemption for dog shows, you have more than 40 dog clubs in this state and many dog shows. The dogs must be confined to crates when not being shown. Dog shows bring in a great deal of income to the area. People stay in motels or hotels, they go out to eat, they frequently go shopping at the local stores and they buy gas. Dog clubs give scholarships to local students, they donate money to local dog activities, and their members are your constituents.

In short and to reiterate my opening statement, this bill if passed, will harm far more responsible dog owners than it will correct the problem it is intended to correct and will be a burden on the tax payers in this state. In my humble opinion, it is silly and a waste of tax payer's money to pass bills that cannot be enforced or will cost a great deal of money to hire the personnel needed to enforce and that cause more harm than good. Another thought: why try to make the ownership of dogs so difficult when dogs bring a great deal of money into the state coffers? Breeders pay sales tax on their puppy sales, people buy dog licenses, owners spend a tremendous amount of money on their dogs, buying dog food, dog toys, veterinary care, etc. all of which brings income into the state of Connecticut and also provides many people employment. Dogs bring joy and happiness into the lives of their owners and they love us unconditionally. Please allow the ownership of dogs to be unconditional.

Thank you,

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