

February 14, 2011

In December 2010 I was with my friend, Caroline Lee, and her small female dog, Ellie, on my private property. We were returning from a mid-day run when suddenly two 90lb male chocolate Labrador retrievers sprinted from a neighbor's yard towards us. When it became apparent that they were after her Elli, Carolyn bent down to shield Ellie from the dogs' attack. For the next ten minutes or so we tried to physically ward off the animals as they refused to respond to standard commands for obedience. It was not until we were finally able to make it into a car on my driveway that we were safe from the dogs' attack. Caroline Lee sustained scratches and many bite marks along her body from the dogs' attempt to get to her defenseless animal. The attack also strained both of us emotionally for several weeks.

When the dog warden arrived on the scene of the attack, he was put in a difficult situation. The attack was highly aggressive and Caroline sustained significant injury, but the dogs were focused on attacking her small animal, and he saw a restraining order or destruction of the dog to be too extreme of a measure. How can we expect dog wardens to administer justice when their only two enforcement tools, a complete restraining order or the death penalty?

I contacted Linda Schofield because I believe that animal control officers, like our police officers, need to have a little more flexibility when administering the laws concerning dog attacks in Connecticut. More flexibility would not only allow for the owners of dangerous dogs to be held more accountable, but also protect the dogs from unjust punishment. I, like my friend Caroline, am a dog lover, but we have to update the system to protect our neighbors while protecting our dogs. We need more interim measures in place such as dog retraining with fine's attached to make sure there is compliance. That is why I support Linda Schofield's bill today.

Thank you,

Patricia Connolly

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