

Testimony Concerning SB 253
Elizabeth Bartek
Big Fluffy Dog Rescue

I would like to thank the Environmental Committee for the opportunity to express my concerns on SB253, An Act Concerning Revisions to the Animal Importation Statutes.

I am a registered voter in West Hartford (registered under married name Elizabeth Sypher), and I am a Foster and Adoption Coordinator for Big Fluffy Dog Rescue.

"The assumption that animals are without rights, and the illusion that our treatment of them has no moral significance, is a positively outrageous example of Western crudity and barbarity. Universal compassion is the only guarantee of morality." - Arthur Schopenhauer, German Philosopher

My moral compass directs me to support a variety of causes and constituencies because I strongly believe that it's my duty—to better the lives of those around me because I am fortunate enough to have the ability to do so. Animal rescue is one of the causes I feel most strongly about. I have adopted a dog needing a home, a cat from the Connecticut Humane Society because someone else thought of it as 'disposable' and have fostered a number of dogs who needed a resting place before finding their forever homes.

Big Fluffy Dog Rescue has struggled with new laws that have come into effect in Connecticut. The current requirement of having dogs seen by a Connecticut vet within 48 hours of arrival and again within in two weeks of being in the state is absolutely financially debilitating, in addition to being extremely burdensome to coordinate for our volunteer-based, non-profit organization.

Most of our dogs arrive to the state on a Saturday and getting them into a Connecticut vet within 48-hours is unreasonable. Repeated visits are unnecessary as all of our animals have been seen by a vet (out of state) within five days before travel across state lines.

While we agree that all animals should be seen by a vet, we strongly disagree that it should be mandated that it be a Connecticut vet. Volunteers living on border towns and other fosters in Eastern and Western Connecticut have good relationships with veterinary practices in MA, RI and NY. The current laws state that we do not have the choice to have our dogs seen at these practices due to the location. We have also seen a great increase in dogs coming into rescue in the New England states. These dogs have been completely vetted and it is unnecessary for them to be rechecked by Connecticut vet just to have the opportunity to go to a foster home.

If the main goal here is to prevent communicable disease and protect Connecticut people and animals, we suggest requiring all animals that come into the state be vaccinated, altered and micro-chipped to the rescue who is responsible for them. This will truly curb the spread and incidence of disease.

Under the current legislation, any dog can come into Connecticut and go to a foster as long as it is seen within 48 hours and as well as a later visit. If for some reason this dog was ill, it would have the opportunity to pass the illness to any animal it comes in contact within those 48 hours. Therefore, this mandated law actually protects no one. However, if the requirement was to have the dogs vaccinated before they arrive to Connecticut, the opportunity for infection is significantly lessened.

I strongly urge you to consider the revision of the amount of vet visits required when a dog is brought into to the state.

I also urge you to consider that while requiring a vet visit is necessary, we should have the freedom to use any vet we choose, be it a Connecticut vet or otherwise.

Thank you,

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The allegation is that rescues that bring dogs in from other areas keep local dogs in shelters from finding homes.
We have heard this refrain many times.

The reality is that it's not true.

New England states have been very successful in enforcing spay and neuter laws with the result that the numbers of dogs in need is low.

Other areas of the country (the midwest, the South and the southern California area come to mind) have not been proactive in addressing animal populations and the result is a plethora of unwanted dogs of every breed and mix imaginable.
This is not the case in Connecticut.

We have been told repeatedly that it's a myth that the local shelters only have pit mixes in need and we were invited to review the dog listings in the local shelters. And so we did.

This is what our survey of all the shelters and organizations that purportedly pull only from local shelters has in house:

Dogs in CT shelters and related
entities 6/27/11

<u>Shelter Name</u>	<u>Bully breeds</u>	<u>Labs</u>	<u>Chihuahuas</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
Animal Friends of CT	2	0	0	0	2
Animal Rescue Foundation Inc	0	0	0	1	1
Animal Rescue Fund Inc. Waterbury	0	0	0	0	0
Animal Welfare League of New London	0	0	0	0	0
Animal Welfare Society	1	0	1	10	12
Animals for Life	5	1	0	4	10
Ansonia	3	0	0	2	5
Avon/Canton	0	0	0	0	0
Bethel Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Bloomfield Animal Control	1	0	0	1	2
Branford Animal Shelter	8	0	1	2	11
Bridgeport Animal Control	18	0	0	0	18
Bully Breed Rescue	21	0	0	0	21
Burlington Animal Shelter	0	0	0	0	0
Canine Advocates of Newtown	3	1	0	4	8
City of Hartford/Bloomfield	7	1	1	1	10
City of New Britain Animal Control	1	0	0	0	1
Connecticut Humane Society -Newington	4	0	2	10	16
Connecticut Save a Pup	0	0	0	1	1
Cromwell Animal Control	1	0	0	0	1
Danbury Animal Control	4	1	0	1	6
Derby Animal Shelter	5	0	0	0	5
District Animal Control (Woodbridge)	0	0	0	1	1
Dog Patch Rescue	1	0	2	25	28
Durham Animal Control Shelter	0	0	0	0	0
East Haddam Dog Pound	2	0	0	0	2
East Hartford Animal Control	12	0	0	1	13
East Haven Animal Shelter	8	0	0	2	10
East Windsor Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Easton Animal Shelter	1	0	0	0	1
Ellington Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Enfield Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Fairfield Animal Shelter	2	1	0	0	3
Farmington Animal Control	2	0	0	0	2
Flora's Pet Project	1	0	3	2	6
Friends of Berlin Animal Control	1	0	0	0	1
Friends of Mansfield Animal Shelter	0	0	0	2	2
Friends of New Haven Animal Shelter	21	5	0	0	26
Glastonbury Animal Control	1	0	0	2	3
Greenwich Animal Control	1	0	0	2	3
Haddam Dog Pound	4	1	0	1	6
Hamden Animal Control	8	0	0	1	9
Kent Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Lebanon Animal Control	1	0	0	1	2
Ledyard Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0

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Manchester Animal Control	3	0	0	1	4
Mansfield Animal Control	1	1	0	0	2
Meriden Animal Control	10	0	3	1	14
Meriden Humane Society	18	0	5	15	38
Middletown Animal Control	2	0	0	0	2
Monroe Police Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Montville Animal Control	1	0	0	0	1
Naugatuck Municipal Animal Pound	1	0	0	1	2
New Fairfield Sherman Animal Welfare	0	3	0	1	4
New London Animal Control	2	0	0	0	2
North Haven Animal Control	3	0	0	0	3
Northeast CT Animal Rescue Inc.	4	0	0	0	4
Northeast Regional Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Norwalk Animal Control	1	0	0	1	2
Norwich Animal Control	2	0	0	1	3
Old Lyme Animal Shelter	2	0	0	3	5
Old Saybrook Animal Control	1	0	0	0	1
Oxford Animal Shelter	2	0	0	0	2
PAWS	14	2	2	5	23
Plainfield Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Plainville Animal Control	0	0	0	1	1
Plymouth Animal Control	1	0	0	0	1
Protectors of Animals	4	0	1	2	7
Rocky Hill Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Sadie Mae Foundation	2	0	1	1	4
Save Our Strays	0	0	1	1	2
Seymour Animal Shelter	3	0	0	0	3
Shelton Animal Shelter	15	0	0	3	18
Somers Animal Shelter	0	0	0	0	0
South Windsor Police Service	0	0	0	0	0
Southbury Pound	2	0	0	0	2
Sprague Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Stafford Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Stamford Animal Control	18	0	0	2	20
Stonington Animal Care & Control	0	0	0	1	1
Stratford Animal Control	8	0	0	1	9
Strays and Others	2	0	0	2	4
Suffield Animal Shelter	0	0	0	0	0
The Animal Center, Inc.	1	0	0	1	2
The Animal Haven Inc	0	0	0	2	2
Tolland Animal Control	1	0	0	0	1
Town of Groton Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Town of Putnam Pound	1	0	0	1	2
Town of Windham Animal Control	2	0	0	0	2
Town of Windsor Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Trumbull Animal Group	5	0	0	1	6
Valley Shore Animal Welfare League	2	1	1	5	9

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Vernon Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
Wallingford Animal Shelter	7	0	0	7	14
Waterbury Animal Shelter	8	0	0	0	8
Waterford Animal Control	1	0	0	0	1
Watertown Animal Control	0	0	0	0	0
West Hartford Animal Control	3	0	1	0	4
West Haven Animal Shelter	3	0	0	7	10
Westport Animal Control	3	0	0	2	5
Totals	309	18	25	146	498
% of total adoptable population	62.05%	3.61%	5.02%	29.32%	

Looking at the bottom line, 62% of the dogs in Connecticut shelters are bully breeds, the second most common breed is chihuahua, followed by labs and then actually huskies, followed by a smattering of everything else.

In short, it is NOT a myth that bully breeds are the predominate dogs in Connecticut shelters.

Which brings us full circle: imported dogs are not causing dogs in shelters to not get adopted. Breed specific bans in homeowner's insurance policies are one cause, as is the simple truth that the residents of Connecticut are not all willing to adopt a bully breed dog.

If someone has evidence to the contrary, we've never seen it. Most likely, it does not exist.