

**Testimony Concerning HB-5844**  
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I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of HB-5844 AN ACT CONCERNING THE OVERNIGHT TETHERING OF DOGS OUTDOORS AND THE TETHERING OF DOGS OUTDOORS UNDER CERTAIN WEATHER CONDITIONS. .

I am a registered voter in Wallingford.

I am an animal lover and in particular a lover of man and woman's best friend, dogs. I have been blessed with having six wonderful family members of the canine persuasion in my household directly, and countless dear canine friends. I happen to be a bit of a religious and spiritual person, a graduate student of religious studies at present at Hartford Seminary, for example. In my lifetime of experience, prayer and meditation I have come to believe that I am a spiritual being having a temporary human experience. I have also come to the firm conclusion that dogs are spiritual beings having a temporary canine experience.

Like all of us, I have had times of crisis in my life when being emotionally distraught was problematic. At those times every dog I have had as a family member or that I had the opportunity to interact with has elevated my mood. I have always said that it's impossible to be depressed when you're playing with a puppy. I was a bullied kid, and our rescued Beagle mix saved my life in those days by allowing me to be his chosen partner and taking long walks with me on the beach in Milford that we lived on, and using her sense of humor to bring laughter to me and my family which also was suffering frequent crises.

This bill, first and foremost will benefit all dogs and dog owners as well as the rest of the community in a way that might not be so obvious. People whose dogs are chained outside late at night, because dogs are by nature social pack animals and when deprived of companionship they feel unsafe, insecure and unhappy will often bark, howl and whine loudly. This is inconvenient and often enrages neighbors of those who leave their dogs out late at night, and this creates prejudicial attitudes among people not so familiar with our canine friends and sentiments against dogs and dog owners. Often police squad cars wind up settling squabbles between neighbors at wee morning hours over Fido's barking. Prohibiting the chaining of animals at inappropriate hours would benefit communities in this manner and untold other ways, that would not necessarily be obvious at first glance.

Chaining dogs for long periods is often done neglectfully and I think most of us have witnessed this type of behavior by dog owners and seen sad canines alone all day for hours on end, keeping in mind their social/pack instinct. This loneliness for dogs is horrible and does result in emotional disturbance in these sensitive and loving animals. But chaining for long periods is not

only done in a neglectful manner.

As the Acting Director of New Haven's residential Crisis and Respite program for psychiatric Patients, we were located in a three family home in the inner city. Adjacent to us was a home and while I worked there (for 3 to 4 years) occupants moved in and a large page fence cage was built in the back yard. Soon thereafter we observed Pit Bull dogs placed in the pen. One dog we would observe chained on a fire escape-type landing on the second floor (a tiny space, perhaps 5 feet by 5 feet). This pup would, of course bark loudly in protest for long periods before being allowed in. Soon we observed that two dogs penned in the larger cage were additionally chained on short lengths within that confinement in the heat of summer for hours on end. I witnessed the dogs chained on one occasion chained in the pen in such a manner so that they could not reach bowls of food and water placed in the center of the pen.

I reported these activities to New Haven authorities, both police and the Animal Control agency, and I learned that other responsible neighbors had done the same. Neighbors, my staff and I would share with each other our concern for these animals. It was obvious that these animals were being intentionally abused, probably to train them for dog fighting. To the City's credit it was not long before this operation disappeared virtually overnight after an apparent barrage of neighborhood complaints.

Dogs who are in the out of doors in extreme heat suffer as much as anyone would imagine, given their fur coats and inability to sweat as humans can. Shade and shelter is crucial in hot weather, as it obviously is in wet, cold and snowy weather. Just imagine a naturally extroverted child outdoors in the rain alone for hours, or in the cold, snow or heat and possibly for hours on end in the depth of the dark night without shelter. The sadness and danger of exposure, freezing, dehydration or even death would be unimaginable. That is what these wonderful animals suffer when exposed to these conditions.

Connecticut and this Committee has an opportunity to put an end to the problem municipal officials face when dogs are chained outdoors at absurd hours, to put an end to the legal intentional abuse of animals by chaining them in cruel manners, and to enhance the lives of the animals entrusted to people and to all of the state's residents by ensuring that animals will at the very least have shelter in extreme weather. There is no cost in passing this bill and a large number of benefits, so I urge each member to vote in favor of this bill. Thank you.