

March 13, 2013

Dear Honorable Committee,

My name is Charlene Dutka, I am a resident of Goshen CT. Thank you for allowing me to speak concerning S.B. No. 921 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING LIABILITY FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY A DOG. The message of this bill is personal and important to me. Five years ago the content of this bill was submitted based upon a request I submitted.

On May 17, 2008 I was walking my 80 pound black lab, Maxx, he was on a leash. My newly adopted 5 year old son was accompanying us on our walk. A neighbor's newly purchased dog was let out of his house when he went to door, as he saw us walking by.

To my horror, the dog stood 80 feet away ready to attack us. My son Manty was ready to run, my first thought was to protect my son, and have him stand behind me. This was not an easy task as my son did not speak English and I did not speak Lithuanian. Finally my son was safe behind me, as I attempted to get my 11 year old devoted Maxx safely behind me, the other dog tore Maxx from his collar, and I was holding an empty leash.

The remainder of the story is long and painful; I will only include a small part of what happened. Through much interaction I was able to get Manty to run home to get help from his older brothers. This was done while Maxx was being dragged and ripped apart by the other dog.

Maxx was dragged for 120 feet into a ravine, my oldest son jumped into the ravine filled with water; my next to oldest son was there to help. The other dog retreated, thinking Maxx was dead. My oldest sons carried Maxx up the hill, which is the first thing I remember after telling them not to jump into the ravine.

Shock and trauma are real, and recently I settled out of court with the home owner's insurance company because I suffered from the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. I didn't go to trial because the trial date was pushed up, and I would really prefer not to relive the day Maxx was attacked.

Maxx, the special creature who consumed my heart and soul is the reason I am here today.

You see the laws in Connecticut do not hold irresponsible dog owners financially responsible for injuries to another person's animal. The representative for the home owner's insurance company actually told me I should have let Maxx die because he had no value; he depreciated much like a car would. You see when Maxx was attacked my family was fortunate we could afford to pay for Maxx's nearly \$20,000 in medical bills. Maxx lived for another 2 ½ years after this incident, dying on Christmas morning 2011.

Due to PTSD I lost my job in 2009. If this type of attack occurred today, to Murphy, Maxx's litter sister, or Judy our two year old black lab, I would have to let them die because we could not afford to pay for medical attention. That is just wrong! Please pass Maxx's bill this year in honor of the additional 2 ½ years we were able to share with Maxx. Maxx continued to be my shadow for that time, albeit one less leg, one less shoulder, metal plates in his jaw, a reattached ear, other injuries and a heart bigger than the moon.

Sincerely,

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