

Environment Committee
Public Hearing: 3/15/13

Testimony Concerning HB 5844
An Act Concerning the Overnight Tethering of Dogs Outdoors and the
Tethering of Dogs Outdoors Under Certain Weather Conditions.

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I have spoken with numerous Animal Control Officers in recent months, and there is unanimous agreement that the current dog tethering statutes are not yet strong and concrete enough to give chained dogs the protection they need. While there are solid restrictions regarding the manner in which dogs may be chained, there is no language that addresses the length of time a dog may be chained - except for the phrase prohibiting chaining "for an unreasonable period of time." When this language was originally passed, it was surely intended to prevent chaining a dog 24/7. But in practice, ACOs have declared it completely unenforceable.

HB 5844 proposes to establish concrete, enforceable time limits, by prohibiting chaining at night between 10PM and 6 AM. Dogs are highly social creatures, the last thing they want is to be alone outside in the dark. Nor do they want to be outside in severe cold or heat.

I am constantly hearing stories of chained dogs who live outside on the end of a chain far away from the family they would love to be with, out in the bitter cold, in the middle of a blizzard, or a hurricane, obviously leading a life of misery. An ACO is called to investigate the situation. Time after time, the ACO returns with the report that "there is nothing I can do."

For those who live next to these suffering dogs, or drive by them on their way to work every day, it is incredibly frustrating and inconceivable that Connecticut allows this obvious cruelty to continue under current law.

Please give ACOs the laws they need to be able to finally do something in order to bring these dogs inside even for just the night or to weather a storm.

Thank you for your support of this bill.