

**Testimony Concerning HB 5844
DR REGINA MILANO
MEMBERS OF WHHS HUMANE CLUB**

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to express our 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 West Haven, and I am a teacher, wildlife rehabilitator and moderator of a high school animal rights club. Student members of West Haven High School's Humane Club, taking part in this testimony are listed below.

If we do not exercise compassion toward our weakest, least powerful beings, our whole species suffers. All living breathing beings feel, think, have preferences, families and relationships. In particular, humans have depended on dogs for their very survival at times. Dogs in return provide us with loyalty, comfort, safety and love. When we get dogs, we have a responsibility to treat them humanely. They are not inanimate objects.

To disregard their needs is a betrayal of a special relationship and it is also cruel. When dogs are left outside all night, they experience a great deal of discomfort and loneliness. It is especially wrong to leave them out in the cold, where they are at risk for predation and frostbite. Dogs express their loneliness and discomfort by barking, as well which annoys people and creates bad relationships among neighbors who love animals and those who "own" them, often as status symbols or for their own profit. Tethering is also extremely cruel because it can result in animals getting wrapped around objects and choking themselves. It also can prevent that animal from being able to reach shelter, if one is provided and can completely immobilize the animal depending on the length of the tether. There is no law to state the length of the tether.

One neighbor of mine bred two beagles in the middle of winter in the back of his yard. When the puppies were sold, he took the father away from the mother and left her

completely alone in a cramped cage that had a dog house in it, but with no bedding or a flap to block the wind. This short haired dog froze constantly during that record winter (temperatures as low as 0 F). I offered them hay, they declined. I offered to help move the house to face away from the wind, which would blow right into the house. They declined. Finally I called the police. The officer was able to convince them to bring the dog in, but only for two evenings. It was heartbreaking. Each night, neighbors took turns bringing the dog a warm steak. That was the only companionship she ever received because the only time the family ever paid attention to her was to feed her. That dog NEVER left that cage.

In another incident, a coach left a puppy tethered to a tree in freezing rain in the winter. The dog became wrapped around the tree and froze to death in a puddle that eventually turned to ice. Another household kept their dog outside in bitter weather until she became wrapped up in a bush and almost choked until a neighbor happened to see her. Students frequently share stories of animals languishing outside in their neighborhoods, so our club started a program to donate dog houses made by students to those who leave their dogs outside. We were astonished when some people actually refused the free gift! A law must exist to prevent these atrocities from happening to another dog. Please support HB 5844.

Thank you,

Dr. Regina Milano Jane Ciarlone Anthony Ciarlone, Students Members of Humane Club:

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