

March 14, 2013

Environment Committee
Connecticut State Legislature

Re: My Support of HB 5844

Dear Committee Members, Other State Legislators and Everyone who has ever cared about a dog:

I have witnessed dogs cruelly and heartlessly chained up outside, 24/7, in Bridgeport for many, many years. My complaints to animal control, the mayor's office, the police department, local and state elected officials, continually fall on deaf ears, OR, if addressed at all, the response has been that the dog is licensed in the city, has a dog house and is "fine." This is unacceptable. I spoke in front of the Bridgeport Common Council in March 2011 in regards to 2 particular dogs who are forced to lead a horrible life tethered outside, with one dog that has suffered outside for many years during snow storms, extreme heat, etc. Wonder if my council representatives lost my phone number because neither has contacted me about my presentation 2 years ago. The city's animal control officer, as well as the captain of the police department who oversees the shelter, have told me that the particular dogs I complained about were fine. The owners of some of the dogs I have seen and have taken pictures of have threatened me with bodily harm if I continue to "make trouble." I have launched social media campaigns to have the Bridgeport residents contact the police department to complain, but the dogs remain tethered in Bridgeport.

With the addition of the overnight and the extreme weather conditions aspect of HB 5844, maybe THEN the animal control officers will enforce the anti-tethering law. I was so excited when the anti-tethering bill was passed, but only to watch it not be used to humanely help tethered dogs in Bridgeport. Fairfield, Stratford, Trumbull: these adjoining cities do not tolerate such behavior. Only in Bridgeport is such treatment of these dogs is allowed.

In addition to watching a dog have to live in a dog house during extremely cold weather, in rainy, muddy conditions, living in a metal enclosure in extreme heat, there are reasons to pass this bill other than the humane aspect of it, as if that wasn't enough in itself. It is not uncommon for Bridgeport dogs to be tethered in front yards or in driveways or blocking garages. With such tethering, the dog loses her/his socialization skills and becomes mean and unapproachable. What message does a mean OR ANY dog tethered up outside continually send to children or neighbors passing by on their way to school, works or running errands? It says that such tethering is an acceptable thing in Bridgeport. What if the dog breaks free? I have seen more dogs than I care to with collars or tethers breaking into their skin from being on too tight or attached inappropriately. It is not the dog's fault that it is not the social, friendly dog it was prior to having to live outside, tethered continually and inappropriately. How do first responders get into a house or garage or building if there is an emergency? Would lives be lost, people, including the

responders, injured and/or property damaged, because the responders couldn't get pass an angry dog to address a medical or fire emergency? Why should federal mail carriers have to worry about a dog breaking free? Why should neighbors have to see and listen to a dog barking or crying all of the time?

I beg you to pass this bill. This is Connecticut. We need to tell our residents that if they are unable to own and care for their dogs in a kind, compassionate and humanely way, then they will be fined and hopefully, the animal control officers can remove the dog when such harsh treatment continues against the law. Please help to give the authorities more concrete assistance in enforcing anti-tethering laws. I cannot continue to see these poor dogs live like they do being continually tethered in inhumane conditions. Not acceptable. Please help these dogs. Someone has to.

Thank you.

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