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**Testimony Concerning HB 5361
The Insurance and Real Estate Committee, February 10, 2015
Barbara Rudnick**

I would like to thank the Insurance and Real Estate Committee for the opportunity to express my support of HB 5361, An Act Concerning the use of the Breed of Dog as an Underwriting Factor for Homeowners and Tenants Insurance Policies .

As an animal lover and former volunteer with both the Berlin and New Britian Animal Shelters I support this bill because it will have a major impact regarding adoptions of pit bull-type dogs through out the state.

As a shelter volunteer I have worked with numerous pit bull-type of dogs over the years and what experience has taught me is that the behavior of a dog is the result of responsible dog ownership and education and has nothing to do with the breed of the dog. On numerous occasions I have witnessed ACO's and volunteers "guess" the breed of a dog based upon appearance, even though there are numerous studies and documentation that have proven trying to determine the breed of a dog simply based upon appearance is inconsistent and inaccurate. This is such a concern because in many shelters dogs may actually be euthanized based upon appearance and not their behavior. Many shelter volunteers will tell you the heart breaking story over and over again of loving pit bull-type dogs that have been euthanized even though they had no behavioral concerns.

As a former volunteer with the New Britain animal shelter I honestly did not have much experience with pit bull-type dogs when I began working there. Since I myself have two Chihuahua's, I was requested by the other two volunteers to work with them when possible because they preferred to work with the pit bull-types. Of the three of us, I was the only one ever bitten and it was a Chihuahua. I also have seen so many of them abused, yet they are so forgiving and when rescued the first thing they do is wag their tail and kiss your face.

In Winnipeg, Manitoba they found there was no difference in the incidence of dog bite injuries prior to or following the enactment of BSL. Several other countires have repealed bans on pit bull -type dogs after they were shown to be ineffective . Denver enacted BSL in 1989 and actually experienced a higher rate of hospitalizations as a result of dog bite related injuries than that of breed-neutral Boulder., CO.

Connecticut already has a law prohibiting municipalities from adopting breed- specific ordinances and therefore should not allow insurance companies to use breed in determining the cost or availability of insurance.

It is both ignorant and unacceptable to judge any dog based upon its appearance which is not only inaccurate, but so incredibly unfair to the number of wonderful pit bull -type of dogs in Connecticut shelters in need of homes.

If you are not familiar with the breed I beg you to visit a local shelter. You will find, as I did, that to

know them is to love them.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,
Barbara Rudnick
East Berlin, CT.