



February 10, 2015

**TESTIMONY OF THE
PET INDUSTRY JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL
Re: HB 5361
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON INSURANCE & REAL ESTATE**

Position: SUPPORT

As an organization that routinely supports legislative efforts to advance the welfare of animals and ensure the public health and safety relative to pets and as a member of the recently concluded Task Force on the Sale of Dogs and Cats in Connecticut Pet Stores, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) appreciates the opportunity to express our support for HB 5361, an act prohibiting the use of a dog's breed as an underwriting factor for homeowners' and tenants' insurance policies.

We at PIJAC believe that the first step toward responsible pet ownership and a lifelong commitment to a companion animal is taking the time to find the right pet for your specific situation. We routinely oppose efforts to prohibit or otherwise discriminate against specific breeds of dogs in the public and private sectors, and we commend you for this effort to ensure that all pet owners are given equal consideration by insurance underwriters.

The idea that certain breeds are somehow genetically predisposed to violent behaviors is simply untrue. In fact, the breeds most often targeted by bans are often the same breeds used by law enforcement, in search-and-rescue, and as therapy or service dogs. The wording of this legislation suggests that you have already noted this.

You may also be pleased to learn that a peer-reviewed study of thirty-five years' worth of scientific literature on the subject of serious bite injuries ("Dog Bite Risk and Prevention: The Role of Breed") prepared by the American Veterinary Medical Association found that "it is difficult to support the targeting" of specific breeds "as a basis dog for bite prevention."

We applaud the continued efforts of the Connecticut Assembly to promote responsible pet ownership and to ensure the humane treatment of all animals.

We thank the committee for this opportunity to express our support for HB 5361 and encourage its passage.

Sincerely,

Mike Bober
Executive Vice President
Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council

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