

Testimony Concerning HB 5361
The Insurance and Real Estate Committee, March 3, 2016
Barbara Rudnick

I would like to thank the Insurance and Real Estate Committee for the opportunity to express my support of HB 5443, 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 Britain 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 or irresponsible 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, when in fact they are not pit bulls. 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 and were wonderful dogs.

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 yes it was a Chihuahua. I also have seen so many pit bull-type of dogs abused, yet they are the most forgiving dog I have ever worked with. I have seen them come in covered in scars and wounds and females forced to have litter after litter, yet they forgive. How can a dog wag its tail and give kisses after such abuse?

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 Several other countries have repealed bans on pit bull -type dogs after they were shown to be ineffective .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. I also ask you to please read *The Pit Bull Placebo*, by Karen Delise regarding the media, myths and politics of canine aggression.

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.