

Testimony Concerning HB 5443
Insurance Committee, March 3, 2016
Janice Lund
Berlin Animal Control Officer

I would like to thank the Insurance Committee for the opportunity to express my support of HB 5443. An act concerning the use of breed of dog as an underwriting factor for homeowners and tenants insurance policies.

I have been an Animal Control Officer for 28 years. In my experience over the years of hands on with all breeds of dogs, Pit bulls and other bully breeds are NOT born vicious. It takes human intervention and abuse to make any dog aggressive. Around 90% of the Pit bull breeds that we have seen in our shelter are extremely friendly and adoptable. The occasional young puppy that enters our building is in my opinion, one of the better family pets. Dogs are born social animals and long to be part of a family. When raised properly with training and socialization, they can be a welcome addition to any family.

A pitbull mix named "Gertie" was adopted to a retired couple a few years back. She was a social butterfly. She became a neighborhood dog, that children and adults in the neighborhood would visit and play with on a daily basis.

"Ben", another pitbull, was adopted by a family in our town. He is one of the happiest friendly dogs I have ever met. He sat at the shelter for months because of his breed. Visitors would be drawn to him instantly, but because of the restrictions that insurance Companies have set, he would be passed over.

As an Animal Control Officer, all our dogs are temperament tested prior to adoption. If they show aggressive tendencies no matter what their breed is, they are NOT adopted. Of the many dog bites I have investigated over the past 28 years, I can tell you that the Pitbull breed is not the most frequent breed in our dog bite reports. I do believe that a pit bull can do more damage than a poodle and this is why we hear more about pitbull attacks, but by far, small dogs like Chihuahua's, terriers and poodles are more likely to bite than the pit bull.

Please stop the Insurance industries from denying "Breed specific dogs" from the coverage they provide. Denial of a policy should be based on past behaviors of a particular dog owned by the home owner requesting coverage.

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

Thank you,

Janice Lund, Berlin, CT.