



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

March 9, 2018

Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860-240-0440
envtestimony@cga.ct.gov

Re: **OPPOSE HB 5367**, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISPOSITION OF CERTAIN BITING AND ATTACKING DOGS

Dear Co-Chair Kennedy, Co-Chair Miner, Co-Chair Demicco, Vice Chair Flexer, Vice Chair Gresko, Vice Chair Somers, Ranking Member Harding, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Connecticut-based supporters of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the largest animal protection organization in the country, please accept this public hearing testimony in OPPOSITION to HB 5367.

While we are not opposed to intent of this bill -- to provide clearer guidance on the regulation of dangerous dogs, through the establishment of a working group -- the current proposal does not adequately address the needs of the state. Instead, lawmakers should consider legislation to improve the fairness and enforceability of the statewide dangerous dog law and to provide for a fair and impartial review group that can provide adequate expertise on the matter.

The HSUS understands what a large responsibility it is to create safe communities within the state, and we wholeheartedly support the need for reasonable dog regulations in order to achieve that goal, fostering peaceful coexistence with dogs as companions. To achieve these goals, it is critical to avoid policies and procedures which threaten the human-animal bond and put more pets at risk of losing their homes unnecessarily.

Dangerous dog laws can be complicated and it's important to craft them carefully to ensure they are effective, humane and enforceable. There must be due process for a dog to be deemed dangerous, just as in the criminal justice system every individual is innocent until proven guilty; with the stakes so high it's important to create a process that allows a court of law to determine whether a dog should be declared dangerous without unnecessarily removing dogs from their homes. The currently proposed working group represents biased interests that do not serve to protect dogs or their families in Connecticut.

We thank you very much for your attention to this and would welcome the opportunity to work with lawmakers to ensure effective dog regulation within the state. Everyone wants to live in a safe community and we should do everything possible to prevent harmful dog-related incidents from occurring.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Annie Hornish

Connecticut Senior State Director

The Humane Society of the United States

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