

# Connecticut Town Clerks Association, Inc.

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## Written Testimony

Mark H. Bernacki -Town Clerk of New Britain  
Connecticut Town Clerks Association (CTCA)

### **SB 997, An Act Concerning Dog Licensing Fees**

### **SB 999, An Act Concerning the Fee for Adopting a Dog, Cat or Other Domestic Animal from a Municipal Pound and Requiring the Licensing of Such Cats and other Domestic Animals**

Environment Committee  
Monday, March 11, 2019

Good afternoon Senator Cohen, Representative Demicco, Senator Miner, Representative Harding and the distinguished members of the Environment Committee, thank you for affording me the opportunity to present this testimony in **respectful opposition to Senate Bills 997 and 999**. My name is Mark Bernacki, I am the Legislative Committee Chair of the Connecticut Town Clerks Association and the Town Clerk of New Britain.

Connecticut Town Clerks have been reporting that the number of dog licenses have been falling over the last few years. As of today my town has licensed 1,713 dogs for a population of over 73,000. While many smaller towns exceed this percentage, they also report that their licensing numbers have fallen.

Town Clerks expenses far exceed the fee received, even with the proposed increase under 997 or 999. Presently Clerks mail annual notifications, purchase/lease the dog licensing software, assist in running vaccination/licensing clinic, purchase tag and license materials, hold contests for the #1 tag to raise awareness, and mail required materials back to the dog owner. (Further when mailing the tag, there is an additional \$.21 cent surcharge because of the metal "s" hook). Requests to DEA to change to a thin o ring to avoid this have not been honored. Further, licensing is to occur all in June. Town Clerk offices appropriate significant staff time to process these licenses.

SB 999 seems to expand the burden to license "cats or other domestic animals" adopted from a municipal animal shelter or dog pound is also of concern to our members. It appears to be a gateway to license cats and other domestic animals, which is a HUGE added burden to the town clerk's office. Many offices simply do not have the staff for that to occur.

CTCA would encourage the development of a state-wide on-line system that would include:

- Public 24/7 access to procure license (the Clerk would mail the tag)
- Animal Control Officer 24/7 access to verify licensing and return lost dogs. Further an ACO could be given access to help return a lost dog that crosses into another town.
- Data collection/reporting – reconciliation
- Reduction in processing costs to all 169 municipalities.
- A flat fee would further streamline the process.

In conclusion, though CTCA opposes this legislation as currently drafted and if the committee moves forward with this legislation, we would be more than glad to continue working with you on a proposal that best serves the pet owning public. Our past Legislative Chair, Deb Denette, East Haddam Town Clerk, continues to be part of the working group addressing these concerns.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I would be glad to answer any questions.