



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

July 5, 2021

Re: [LR30.103](#)¹, Amendment to Section 111-6 of the Code of Ordinances (tethering ban)

Dear Honorable Board of Representatives,

On behalf of the Stamford-based supporters of The Humane Society of the United States, please accept this testimony in support of the proposed ordinance that amends Sec. 111-6 of the Code of Ordinances.

Millions of people in the United States have dogs as part of their families. Many of these dogs live indoors, but a large number also live outside, many kept on chains or tethers. Tethering is not always an indicator of neglect, but dogs who live their lives chronically chained outside are vulnerable to extreme weather and often suffer from severe deprivation and loneliness. Dogs are social animals who thrive on interaction. An otherwise friendly dog, if rarely taken off a chain, can become anxious and aggressive. A study found that chained dogs are more than 5.4 times more likely than unchained dogs to bite children under the age of 12.² This bill will ensure that a dog is not chained and left unattended without his/her owner at the property, serving to reduce the likelihood of a dog bite incident.

The language that passed unanimously through the Legislative and Rules Committee offers the benefit of clear language and ease of enforcement. However, discretion must be utilized to avoid the unintended consequence of unfairly separating people from their pets, and we were pleased that discretion by law enforcement was discussed as a matter of legislative intent during the committee discussion that followed the public hearing.

The HSUS works with advocates, animal shelters, and lawmakers across the country to help guide them towards the best solutions for the dogs living outdoors in their communities. We are proud to take a holistic approach to this complex issue, an approach that includes providing resources and direct care as well as advocating for policy change.

¹ <http://www.boardofreps.org/lr30103.aspx>

² Gershman KA, Sacks JJ, Wright JC. Which dogs bite? A case-control study of risk factors. *Pediatrics* 1994;93:913–917.

Through our Pets for Life (PFL) program, for example, we engage in door-to-door community outreach to provide pet owner support services. PFL delivers veterinary care, supplies, services, and information to people and animals in underserved areas and promotes greater recognition of how communities are destabilized by unjust systems and policies that impact people and their pets. We also support humane standards for dogs who live outdoors. Specifically, we advocate for policies that protect dogs from extreme weather; require adequate food, water, and shelter; and prohibit chronic and inhumane kinds of tethering. Further, we support ongoing community education efforts and advise temporary amnesty periods to allow dog owners time to adjust to new legal requirements.

The HSUS recognizes that each state, county, and city will have different approaches to ensuring the well-being of their resident citizens and their dogs. We provide guidance and support that is customized and appropriate for each community, promote practical and humane standards of care, and advocate for the best protections for all dogs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Annie Hornish
Connecticut State Director
The Humane Society of the United States
ahornish@humanesociety.org
(860) 966-5201