

From: [David @ Eyes Of Steel](#)
To: [Shaw, Ramya](#); [Montalvo, Barbara](#); [Board of Representatives](#); [Morson, Eric](#); [BOR AllReps](#)
Subject: Re: Request for Board Action on Ordinance 1321 — A Critical Moment for the New Term
Date: Sunday, December 7, 2025 9:44:57 AM

Dear Members of the Board of Representatives,

Please see below my opened letter to the editor at the CT Examiner.

<https://ctexaminer.com/2025/12/06/a-historic-vote-for-compassion-and-an-unexpected-reversal/>

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

David Michel
914-843-7545

P.S. i was also made aware my email to the board in regards to committees being merged had not been sent to you upon request, despite leadership receiving it. I did forward it after sending my emails about the petshop and Tree ordinances. I would love to know more about the process of ensuring an email from the public directed at the full board, gets to the full board individual emails in a timely manner.

On Fri, Dec 5, 2025, 10:54 PM David @ Eyes Of Steel <davidmichel74@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear President Shaw, Majority Leader Morson and to the other Members of the 32nd Board of Representatives,

Congratulations on the beginning of a new term. I hope each of you enters this session with a strong sense of purpose, commitment and pride in serving the residents of Stamford. The Board of Representatives is the institution people rely on most to protect their welfare, uphold ethical governance and act when the moment requires courage.

My name is David Michel and am a Stamford resident (Rockledge Drive) and a former CT State Rep from January 2019 to January 2025.

As you know, Ordinance 1321 — regulating the sale of dogs and cats in pet shops — passed the previous Board with overwhelming bipartisan support, 35 yes votes, one no and one abstention. That level of unity was rare, and it reflected something deeper than ordinary policy debates: a clear consensus that Stamford should not participate in the cruelty pipeline that funnels animals from mass-breeding facilities into our community.

The recent mayoral veto places this new Board at a defining crossroads. The reasons cited in the veto statement are framed as legal barriers, yet the underlying conflict is not legal, but political. The ordinance was crafted upon the same combination of municipal authorities that Stamford has used for years to enact environmental protections, business regulations, public-health rules and consumer-protection measures. These include the city's authority to prevent cruelty, regulate the keeping of animals, regulate businesses that pose health or fraud risks and enact ordinances in furtherance of these powers under §7-148.

None of these statutes prohibit the City of Stamford from acting.

The suggestion that municipal regulation in this area is “preempted” simply does not align with the text of state law or with long-standing municipal practice. Stamford has previously enacted ordinances stronger than state law — including our plastic-bag ordinance — without facing preemption. The difference today is not statutory language. It is political pressure from the Department of Agriculture, an agency that, as many advocates across the state have already noted, has repeatedly opposed reforms in animal-welfare policy.

Supporting statewide legislation does not prevent Stamford from leading locally. Municipal leadership is often what breaks stalemates at the Capitol, not the other way around.

Members of the previous Board strongly expressed that if the ordinance were challenged in court, they would welcome the opportunity to defend it. Legal support was offered by national organizations. The will of Stamford residents remains overwhelmingly united behind the ordinance. And in neighboring Danbury, where public outrage emerged after the opening of a puppy-mill-connected pet shop, officials are now exploring the same type of legislation Stamford just passed.

If Danbury moves forward while Stamford retreats, the message will be unmistakable.

This is not the legacy Stamford should choose.

As representatives, you now carry the responsibility to decide whether this ordinance — passed with overwhelming public support and near-unanimous legislative support — should stand. The charter provides you with the authority to override a veto when necessary to defend the public interest. That threshold exists precisely for moments like this, when the legislative and executive branches diverge in vision and values.

I urge you respectfully to place the veto of Ordinance 1321 on your agenda and allow a vote to override it. Doing so would honor the work of the previous Board, respect the overwhelming will of residents, protect consumers, safeguard animal welfare and ensure Stamford does not cede its leadership on an issue where communities across the state are now looking to us.

More importantly, it would affirm that the Board — as an independent and coequal branch of government — will act when the public interest requires action. This early test can set the tone for the next four years, demonstrating that the Board will stand with residents, not with pressures exerted from outside Stamford.

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Thank you for your service and for considering this request.

Respectfully,

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Former Rep. Michel (he/him) 2019-25

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Former Assistant Majority Whip

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(+)1-914-843-7545

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Montalvo, Barbara

From: David @ Eyes Of Steel <davidmichel74@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 7, 2025 11:29 AM
To: Weinberg, Carl
Cc: Montalvo, Barbara; Shaw, Ramya; Morson, Eric; BOR_AllReps
Subject: Re: Request for Board Action on Ordinance 1321 — A Critical Moment for the New Term

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Mr. Weinberg,
Members of the Board,

For the record, my concern was based on information provided to me in good faith regarding the circulation of public correspondence. I appreciate the clarification regarding the Friday distribution practice.

That said, I am not your personal acquaintance, and I respectfully ask that you address me as Mr. Michel in future communications. Given prior history, maintaining a strictly professional tone is appropriate and expected.

More broadly, I communicated with Board leadership and the full Board because the question raised was institutional in nature, concerning public access and transparency. It would be helpful for the public, not just for me, if the Board at some point clearly outlined how constituent communications are processed and distributed, so misunderstandings do not arise in the future.

Finally, your message served as a reminder for me to follow up on my pending public-records request related to communications surrounding the invocation incident. That request was prompted by a series of unprofessional constituent communications involving yourself and Representative Goldberg. I look forward to receiving the responsive records through the proper legal channels so the public record can be complete and accurate.

I will continue to engage the Board on policy matters with professionalism and respect, and I expect the same standard in return.

Regards,
David Michel
Shippan, D1, Stamford

On Sun, Dec 7, 2025, 10:12 AM Weinberg, Carl <CWeinberg@stamfordct.gov> wrote:

David,

You were misinformed. As is her weekly practice, at 9:45 PM on Friday December 5th Ms. Montalvo sent six emails to the full Board that had been received in the Board office during the week. Your email about merging committees was one of the six. All six were attachments in an email from Ms. Montalvo to the

full Board with the subject line, "Emails send [sic] to bdreps@stamfordct.gov for week ending 251205."

Perhaps your source neglected to open the attachments and read them before misinforming you. If so, you may wish to consider encouraging your source to be a bit more thorough in their research before promulgating misinformation to you. Since you cc'd the full Board on your mistaken allegation, you may also wish to consider setting the record straight about your mistaken allegation with the full Board.

Regards,
Carl Weinberg
Board of Representatives, District 20
Chair, Personnel Committee

From: David @ Eyes Of Steel <davidmichel74@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 7, 2025 9:44 AM
To: Shaw, Ramya <RShaw@StamfordCT.gov>; Montalvo, Barbara <BMontalvo@StamfordCT.gov>; Board of Representatives <bdreps@StamfordCT.gov>; Morson, Eric <EMorson@StamfordCT.gov>; BOR_AllReps <BOR_AllReps@StamfordCT.gov>
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Montalvo, Barbara

From: David @ Eyes Of Steel <davidmichel74@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 7, 2025 12:22 PM
To: BOR_AllReps
Cc: Shaw, Ramya; Morson, Eric; Simmons, Caroline; Mayor's Office; Meyer, Lauren; Toma, Michael
Subject: Ordinance 1321, Legal Authority, and Clarification of Public Misstatements
Attachments: 1000057781.jpg; 1000057785.jpg; 1000057783.jpg

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

**Dear Members of the 32nd Board of Representatives,
Mayor's Office,
Corporation Counsel,**

In light of recent public statements made by Representative Weinberg regarding Ordinance 1321 (the pet shop ordinance), and the subsequent mayoral veto which relies on substantially similar claims, I believe it is important for the full Board and the public record to distinguish clearly between assertion and law.

What follows is a side-by-side comparison of the principal claims circulating publicly and the actual legal framework governing municipal authority in Connecticut.

CLAIM vs. LAW

CLAIM 1:

"The ordinance violates state law and is preempted."

ACTUAL LAW: Connecticut municipalities operate under home-rule authority pursuant to CGS §7-148. This statute expressly grants cities the power to:

Prevent cruelty to animals

Regulate businesses

Protect public health and welfare

Enact ordinances in furtherance of these powers

There is no express preemption in Connecticut statutes prohibiting municipalities from regulating retail pet sales to prevent cruelty or consumer fraud. Under Connecticut law, preemption must be explicit, it is not implied by silence.

CLAIM 2:

“Corporate Counsel determined the ordinance is illegal.”

ACTUAL LAW: Corporation Counsel provides advisory legal opinions, not binding rulings. Their guidance is not law and does not substitute for judicial review. The Board is a coequal branch of government and has both the authority and the duty to exercise independent legislative judgment.

The Board has previously acted contrary to Corporation Counsel’s predictions and prevailed, most notably in the Lifetime Fitness case, where the Board:

Was advised it would lose

Proceeded anyway

Won at trial

Won again on appeal

That history alone demonstrates why advisory opinions, while considered, are not dispositive.

CLAIM 3:

“Non-attorneys improperly overruled legal guidance.”

ACTUAL LAW: Legislators are not required to defer blindly to executive-branch attorneys. Municipal legislatures routinely evaluate:

Statutory text

Case law

Legislative precedent

Municipal practice across the state

That is what occurred here through the Legislative & Rules Committee process.

CLAIM 4:

“The ordinance is unenforceable and symbolic.”

ACTUAL LAW: Dozens of municipalities nationwide have enacted similar ordinances regulating pet shop sales without being invalidated. Ordinance 1321 is enforceable through Stamford’s existing regulatory mechanisms, just as other consumer-protection and animal-welfare ordinances are enforced.

The offer of legal defense from national organizations further confirms that this ordinance is legally credible and defensible.

CLAIM 5:

“Zoning changes alone solved the problem.”

ACTUAL LAW: Zoning regulates where a business may locate. It does not regulate:

Supply chains

Business practices

Consumer fraud

Cruelty embedded in sourcing

Zoning and cruelty-prevention ordinances serve distinct legal purposes and are not substitutes for one another.

CLAIM 6:

“This was a ‘feel-good’ vote.”

ACTUAL RECORD: The ordinance passed 35–1–1, one of the strongest bipartisan votes in recent Board history. That is not symbolic legislation, that is overwhelming legislative consensus reflecting clear public will.

Why This Matters Now

The mayoral veto relies on the same claims circulated publicly by Representative Weinberg, namely preemption and illegality. If those claims were accurate, Stamford would also be operating illegally under numerous existing ordinances that exceed state minimums, including environmental, consumer-protection and public-health regulations.

That is plainly not the case.

Ordinance 1321 is:

Within Stamford's municipal authority

Consistent with CGS §7-148

Not expressly preempted

Enforceable

Legally defensible

Overwhelmingly supported by the previous Board and the public

The question before the 32nd Board is therefore not whether it may lawfully act. The law permits it to do so. The remaining question is one of political will and institutional independence.

Respectfully,

David Michel

Former CT State Representative (*Member of the Planning & Development Committee for 6 years, of cognizance on zoning and municipal powers*)

Stamford D1 Resident

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Subject: Re: Ordinance 1321, Legal Authority, and Clarification of Public Misstatements

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Additional Procedural Concern Regarding Veto Timing and Charter Practice

Members of the Board,
Mayor's Office,

In addition to the substantive legal issues already raised regarding Ordinance 1321, I believe the procedure surrounding the timing of the veto itself warrants careful institutional scrutiny.

I respectfully encourage each member of the Board to:

1. Review the historical common practice governing how ordinances and vetoes have been transmitted between the Mayor's Office and the Board,
2. Compare that practice with the precise language of the City Charter, and
3. Examine the circumstances surrounding the Mayor's first veto in February of this year, and
4. Review the exact circumstances between passage of the four ordinances and the published veto.

When viewed side by side, these comparisons raise a serious and unavoidable question: Why was the strict charter language invoked in this instance in a manner that altered the effective deadline in a way that placed final authority before the incoming Board rather than the outgoing one?

For years, the action report has functioned as the operative trigger for Board action, with printing and physical delivery treated as largely ceremonial. If that long-standing practice suddenly no longer governs, that represents a significant procedural shift, one that should be applied consistently and prospectively, not selectively.

If the charter language is now to be enforced strictly going forward, that clarity is welcome. In fact, it is likely what a court would advise for future cases in order to avoid procedural ambiguity. However, retroactively applying a strict reading to alter the outcome of a single legislative package raises serious legal and institutional concerns.

In that context, it is difficult to understand why Corporation Counsel advised the Board that the veto deadline was December 5 rather than November 26, particularly when the Mayor's Office itself appeared to continue treating the ordinances as valid for much of that intervening period. That inconsistency alone merits formal review.

Most concerning is the appearance that procedural interpretation was adjusted to produce a particular outcome, rather than applied consistently as a neutral rule of governance. Stamford's Charter, ordinances, statutes, and long-standing practices are not tools for strategic maneuvering. They exist to safeguard predictable, fair, and transparent government.

Had the common practice been followed, then all those ordinances would be set to become law.
The Corporate Counsel and Mayor's office decided to do it differently this time.

The optics of waiting until the final moment of a self-adjusted deadline to invalidate multiple ordinances that had already cleared the legislative process creates a deeply troubling public perception, and one that should be corrected through transparent institutional clarification.

Respectfully,
David Michel

On Sun, Dec 7, 2025, 12:21 PM David @ Eyes Of Steel <davidmichel74@gmail.com> wrote:

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From: [aleksa sorgatz](#)
To: [Simmons, Caroline](#)
Cc: [BOR AllReps](#)
Subject: The Mayor's Choice to Veto of Humane Pet Stores and Opportunity to Overturn
Date: Sunday, December 7, 2025 4:05:47 PM

Dear Mayor Simmons,

Thank you for your response regarding Ordinance LR31.072. As a Stamford resident who cares deeply about humane policy and consumer protection, I would appreciate clarification on several points referenced in your email. I will be an active voice in helping to overturn your veto and this will help me better understand your perspective.

Are you aware of the hundreds of Stamford residents who wrote to the Board of Representatives to express their desire to pass this ordinance?

Which specific Connecticut statutes or legal precedents does the City believe would expose Stamford to liability if LR31.072 were enacted?

What state laws would Stamford be failing to abide by if the ordinance moved forward?

I understand that Humane World for Animals offered pro-bono legal support to the City should a lawsuit arise. I am also aware that they have supported other municipalities in similar situations. Could you please clarify why this is not seen as an acceptable option by your administration to support the city of Stamford?

Given that hundreds of municipalities across over 30 states and Washington, DC have successfully enacted humane pet-store laws, how does Connecticut differ in a way that prevents Stamford from doing the same?

How does the humane pet-store ordinance differ from other municipal actions that deviate from state-level allowances? For example, the city of Stamford enacted a stricter plastic bag ordinance than state law without receiving preemption. In addition, other municipalities like Fairfield and Greenwich have taken similar approaches regarding sale of cannabis, which is permissible at the state level but not permitted at a municipal level. How is this situation uniquely different from those examples?

You noted that the state level is the appropriate venue for this issue. Since a similar bill died on the floor last session, what steps do you intend to take to help move it forward this year, given the strong interest expressed by hundreds of Stamford residents?

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
Aleksa Sorgatz
1201 Washington Blvd, Apt 420, Stamford, CT 06902

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