



Senate Bill 195 (Beagle)
Senate Judiciary Committee
Corey Roscoe, Ohio state director, Humane Society of the US
February 26, 2018

Chairman Bacon, Vice Chairman Dolan, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Corey Roscoe and I am the Ohio state director for the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) the nation's largest and most effective animal protection organization. On behalf of the HSUS and our Ohio members and supporters, thank you for the opportunity to provide Interested Party written testimony on SB 195, *to revise provisions of the Dogs Law governing nuisance, dangerous, and vicious dogs, to revise enforcement of that Law.*

The HSUS supports regulation of dangerous animals and understand that managing animals can be a complex responsibility for state and municipal leaders and agencies mandated to serve and protect the public. Everyone wants to live in a safe community and since two-thirds of Americans share our households with companion animals, we should do everything possible to prevent harmful dog-related incidents from occurring.

However, strong dangerous dog laws are only one piece of the puzzle. Having other preventative methods in place is critical. Without them, bites and attacks will continue and there will still be victims of tragedy. The HSUS believes in addressing the factors that directly contribute to creating dangerous dogs and work to mitigate these conditions when possible.

We suggest a renewed focus on basics such as at-large laws, and laws regulating tethering of dogs outside, which is preventative in nature. Dogs are social animals that thrive on interaction. A dog kept in one spot for months or years suffers immense psychological damage. Studies show that chained dogs are much more likely to bite than unchained dogs. *The Centers for Disease Control (CDC)* has concluded that the dogs most likely to attack are male, unneutered and chained.

While considering revisions to the state's dangerous dog law, it would be appropriate at this time to also examine placing state-wide restrictions on the constant and cruel tethering (chaining) of dogs outside. Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati have already upgraded their local codes along with many other municipalities – a statewide restriction on tethering could prevent a patchwork of local laws.



Since no law can fully prevent dog bites and attacks, non-legislative efforts are also needed like more pet owner support with access to services and information that equip them to best manage their dogs' behavior, and being more proactive in the approach to providing "animal control" in a community.

Effective dog management hinges on knowledge of the dog population and the resources available to those dogs and their families. If citizens do not have access to affordable veterinary care or good information about pet care, the root causes of overpopulation and unwanted, free-roaming pets cannot be successfully addressed.

We support legislators in strengthening dangerous dog laws, while providing dog owners with due process and making it incumbent on owners to manage their dog's behavior to prevent injury or threat.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,
Corey Roscoe