

## House Republican Press Release

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### **LEGISLATURE APPROVES TRUMBULL LEGISLATORS' BILL TO ADDRESS DAMAGE TO PETS, LIVESTOCK**



HARTFORD – On Tuesday, May 15, the House of Representatives gave final approval to legislation introduced by State Reps. T.R. Rowe, R-Trumbull, Tom Christiano, D-Trumbull, and State Sen. Bill Finch, D-Bridgeport, that will create a process to address help people address damages done by dogs to pets and other animals. Senate Bill 1079, An Act Concerning Dogs That

Attack Domestic Animals Or Livestock, now moves to Governor M. Jodi Rell for final approval.

Rep. Rowe said the bill would help owners address situations similar to a 2005 incident in Trumbull, in which the Jositas family's dog was attacked and later died from injuries sustained from two loose pit bulls terriers.

"I am very pleased that we were able to push this legislation through the legislative process this year," said Rep. Rowe. "Although based on a tragedy here in Trumbull, it can help victims in the future."

"I am extremely happy and honored to be part of such an important piece of legislation," said Rep. Christiano.

"This was a personal journey for us to bring closure after our collie, Gracie, was killed," said Therese Jositas. "We needed to make sense of her death and create positive change from it. The bill is long overdue and Gracie is no longer the victim of the story, she's the hero."

The bill would specifically establish procedures to address dogs that damage people's pets and other animals that is similar to the law's process for dogs and other animals that bite people. It would require anyone whose animal is attacked by a dog to report the incident to an animal control officer (ACO) and the ACO to investigate. It would allow the Department of Agriculture or an ACO to make any order concerning the restraint or disposal of such an attacking dog after an ACO investigates.

Under the bill, if the owner or keeper of an attacking dog fails to comply with an ACO's order, an ACO may seize the dog to ensure compliance and its owner or keeper would be responsible for any expenses resulting from the seizure. In addition, the dog's owner

could be subject to a fine of up to \$250, and may be imprisoned for up to 30 days, or both.

The bill also allows anyone aggrieved by an order to request a hearing before the commissioner no later than 14 days after the order is issued. After the hearing, the commissioner may affirm, modify, or revoke the order as he deems proper. The bill exempts from its provisions dogs that a state or local police agency owns if they are under the direct supervision, care, and control of an assigned police officer, have received yearly vaccinations and are subject to routine veterinary care.