

# Limit on tying up dogs sought in Suffolk

June 4, 2011 by KERY MURAKAMI / [kery.murakami@newsday.com](mailto:kery.murakami@newsday.com)

Suffolk County may be on its way to joining [New York City](#) and a number of other communities that bar people from leaving their animals tied outside for hours on end.

The measure, sponsored by Legis. Edward Romaine (R-[Center Moriches](#)), is slated for a public hearing before the legislature Tuesday. Thus far, it has the support of Democratic legislators, who control the body, said Majority Leader Jon Cooper (D-[Lloyd Harbor](#)).

Animal rights groups including the Humane Society of [New York](#) say leaving dogs tied up outside in the cold and heat, often without food or water, is cruel. They say it makes the animals aggressive and more apt to attack people, particularly children.

If the measure is approved, the county would be the latest of more than 100 communities and states to either limit or ban tying up animals outdoors.

Romaine said he introduced the bill after receiving complaints about dogs left outside for hours. "Dogs are supposed to be our best friends," he said.

Romaine's proposal would impose a \$250 fine on anyone who ties up or restrains an animal to a "stationary object" outdoors for longer than two hours in any continuous 12-hour period.

New York City's measure, approved Feb. 1, limits the restraining of animals to three continuous hours. It also bars the restraining of animals with a choke collar or materials that could lead to entanglement.

Elinor Molbegott, legal counsel for the Humane Society of New York, was supportive of the Suffolk proposal but suggested it also ban the use of choke collars and other restraints prohibited by New York City's law.

According to [Michigan State University's](#) Animal Law and History Web Center, which tracks laws involving animal issues, 14 states have passed laws restricting the tethering of dogs in some fashion. Molbegott pointed to a site that tracks dog tethering legislation, [unchainyourdog.org](http://unchainyourdog.org), which said 99 communities have passed similar laws. [Nassau County](#) has no such a law but is evaluating New York City's, said Brian Nevin, spokesman for



[Nassau](#) County Executive Edward Mangano.

Romaine said he has not heard opposition to his measure. The [ASPCA](#), on its website, said some have opposed similar laws nationally saying it violates property rights by regulating how they treat their dog. Suffolk County Executive [Steve Levy](#) is evaluating the proposal, a spokesman said.

Molbegott said that, across the United States, more communities are enacting bans or time limitations as society becomes more sensitive to animal cruelty issues.

In April, [Islip](#) Town approved a measure that bars the tethering of dogs in ways that endanger their health or safety; restrict their ability to get food and water; leave them without adequate shelter or limit their movement so that they have to urinate or defecate in the area where they are eating, drinking or lying down.

Gerald Lauber, chief of detectives for the Suffolk County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said he did not know how many complaints the agency has received about dogs being tethered outside. He said the SPCA would first respond to complaints by talking with the dog owner, and if complaints continue, investigators would watch tethered dogs to build a case against the owner.

Lauber, who supports Romaine's proposal, noted that some animal owners may consider it a "matter of convenience" to tie up animals outside for long periods.

But the practice can be cruel, he said. "If you don't want one to be part of your family, don't get a dog," Lauber said.

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