



Featured On This Week's Program

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Legislation To License Groomers

Rosemary Marchetto, Bijou's Bill

Shortly after Rosemary Marchetto's Shih Tzu was dropped at a chain store groomer, she was informed that her dog had died. She feels the groomer was negligent and that the profession needs regulation. Bijou's Bill, named after Rosemary's dog, is being spearheaded by New Jersey Senator Valerie Huttle. The law would require pet groomers to be licensed, at least 18 years old, and tested by the State Board of Veterinary Examiners. Rosemary joins us this week to tell her story. Animal Radio's Joey Villani is also on the forefront of this groundbreaking legislation and he says there is some push-back from many groomers.



Rosemary Marchetto was the guardian of Bijou. She told us that she had taken Bijou to a very well known chain store for a routine grooming. She was surprised when the groomer said to her, "I hope this dog doesn't give me a hard time. I had a bad day." However, Rosemary didn't expect the outcome to be what it became.

Within 45 minutes, Rosemary got a call from the grooming salon and was told that Bijou was dead. Rosemary tells us that they would not disclose to her what happened and they would not let her speak to the groomer nor the store manager.

At that point, Rosemary called the police to come and make a police report, because she needed some kind of documentation as to what was happening.

Rosemary says she eventually took the matter into her own hands after she found out that dog groomers aren't licensed. She felt that she did the right thing by bringing Bijou to a very well known pet store chain, thinking if anything, she was protected by them.

Clearly that wasn't the case and that's how Bijou's Bill started to come together. Rosemary went to her local Assemblywoman, Valerie Huttle. Rosemary had a conversation with her and told her what had happened to Bijou. She then explained to Valerie that there are no laws that require dog groomers to be licensed.

Valerie was appalled. Rosemary states that everyone she tells story to invariably responds right away saying, "Oh, dog groomers aren't licensed?"

In the world we live in today, your nail technician is licensed, your locksmith is licensed and it's hard to believe that people who groom your dogs do not require any type of license. As a matter of fact, not only in New Jersey, but also in most of the country, Rosemary thinks there are only two states that require licenses for dog groomers.

If a groomer was in one of these two states and wanted to be a licensed groomer, they would have to take a practical and written test that given by their state. Upon completion, they would apply for a license that would cost about \$50, depending on the state. They would then be a licensed professional, like a nurse or anybody else who requires a license to practice their craft.



Hindsight's is 20/20 and Rosemary knows that the statement made by the groomer of having a bad day and saying they hoped Bijou didn't give them any trouble, should have been a red flag. We've all been there, and you just think that this person is just blowing off a little steam, as we all have bad days. You're not really thinking they are going to kill your dog.

Bijou died January 11th, 2012 and Rosemary started pursuing legislation in 2014, with the Bill making it through the assembly once before. Rosemary has to give some credit where credit is due to NewJersey.com, who put out an investigative report where they found the deaths of 47 dogs at some of these big box chains. This sort of lit the fire under the Bill for the Bill to start coming back into focus again and to get it through to the General Assembly in New Jersey.

Joey Villani tells us he's been working closely with Rosemary and the Assembly and is a big supporter of this Bill. Joey hopes that it goes through the final stages, and as of right now he doesn't see anything that's going to stop it. It went through the Assembly like a freight train and there was no one that was against it. However, Joey's big issue is, because his claim to fame in the industry is owning schools, he went through the proper process and did everything he needed to do to make sure that pets were safe and were groomed properly. It always bothered him that somebody would open up a salon and do it properly, while the next-door neighbor could open up a salon and call themselves a groomer, because there are no safeguards in place.

Joey explains that licensing a groomer is not a straight jacket for them. What it's going to do is to make them an educated professional. They will learn things like how to properly use the equipment and even how to properly pick a dog up.

In Joey's school, they had to teach the proper way to pick a dog up and put it on the table. Something that sounds so meaningless is so important. They are also taught not to walk away or turn your back on a dog when they are on the table. These may be little things, but if you don't practice them and you don't study them, you won't know them. No one wants anything to happen to a pet, but because groomers not educated and there are no safeguards in place, things happen.

Rosemary is now pioneering something that that could be wonderful for everyone's dogs. Think of all the pet owners out there who didn't know what was going on in grooming salons. Joey tells us he was an advocate from the very beginning as there was a need for some sort of safeguard. Now it's out there, and unfortunately while Bijou passed away, he did not pass in vain because this is going to protect so many other pets and it's well needed.

Surprisingly, Rosemary has been under attack since pursuing this Bill. There's a good majority of people in the grooming industry that are not looking at the big picture. Joey says that a lot of these groomers are probably very good groomers and are safe. However, they're the ones that are saying that this is going to be a hardship on them. Joey explains that it's not going to be a hardship at all. It's just a change in how you do things.

For example, Joey says look at the seatbelt law. No one liked wearing a seatbelt. Now, if we don't, we feel naked. So the pet groomers that are against this just need to rethink it. This is about keeping pets safe. That's it. Let's remember that that is the issue on hand. Groomers are still going to make money, they're still going to do what they do every day and they are still going to love it, for the people who love it. And the people who don't like it, they shouldn't be doing it anyway because it's not for everyone. You have to be a pet lover and if you're a pet lover, you want them safe.

Currently this Bill is just in New Jersey. However, Rosemary tells us she actually has it on Assemblyman Low's desk out in California and that North Carolina is also looking at it at the moment.

Rosemary tells us that she was able to get Bijou's body back after his passing, but due to a lawsuit she filed, she can't talk about the case. However, she does state the fact that the grooming chain took complete liability after the groomer made that disparaging remark, made it all seem a little suspect to Rosemary. She still doesn't know exactly what happened to Bijou, because nobody completely explained it to her.

Rosemary said she sued for the maximum amount, which right now in the state of New Jersey is \$10,000. That's the maximum, because they currently consider dogs property and that's the cap. Another Bill that Rosemary is trying to pass is called the Sentiment Being Act. Surprisingly, the Sentiment Being Act is actually enacted in several countries right now. That would remove ownership. In other words, a dog wouldn't be seen as a piece of furniture, but rather as a living being.

If this can change and something happens, then you have a different way of going about this. Rosemary says this isn't really about suing, this is about preventing dogs from dying so that we don't get to that stage and everybody can take a lesson from what she's been through and whatever the other 47 people that lost their pets have been through. This is preventing this from happening going forward.

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Do You Have The Right Car Seat For Your Fur Baby?

Tim Spell, Automotive Columnist

A recent Harris Poll indicates that many dog owners don't restrain their animals while driving with them. Many admit to allowing their dog to roam freely about the car, sit on their lap or stick their head out the window. Award-winning car columnist Tim Spell tells us the dangers behind unrestrained pets in the car and how to find the right restraining system and use it properly.

First off, Tim tells us that there should never be any dogs in the front seat at all, especially on your lap while you're driving with them hanging head out the window. The problem with this is that both the dogs and the carriers can, if they're not properly attached and tethered to the vehicle, become projectiles. This is especially true if you have a large dog. That loose dog could then fly and hit another person or they can hit the dash and they can even go right through the windshield. A dogs need to be in the backseat properly tethered or in a carrier. The tether and carrier should also be also crash proof and crash worthy.

So what is safer for your pet - a tether or a carrier? Tim explains that a carrier is always better. The carriers should be made of a really a high strength material. They should be made of roto molded plastic, luggage grade plastic or ballistic nylon.



If you have a carrier that you normally put your dog in and it has a plastic case with a wire door, that is not a roto molded carrier. Roto molding is a process that they use where the melted plastic continually rotates and it forms a really strong single piece. An example of this is a kayak. Carriers made this way are much stronger than the regular plastic ones with a wire door. There's also a luggage grade plastic that's good. And if you wanted a softer fabric tether that would work, you can use a ballistic nylon with industrial grade stitching.

You need to understand that there's a lot of force in a collision. If you are driving a car and hit a stationary object at 35 miles an hour and you have a 60-pound dog, that dog becomes like a 3,000-pound projectile. The dog can go right through the windshield or it could hit another passenger. So it's really important that you never use a wire crate.



Now that you have the right carrier, you should also know that placement of the carrier is critical. You should put them down on the floor behind the driver or passenger seat. If you have a three row SUV, and you have a small dog 20-pounds or less, you can put the carrier on captain's chair in the middle. If you have a larger dog, you should put them in the backseat, but never put them on the tunnel in between rows.

Tim has three dogs that he sometimes travels with. He has a crate in the rear compartment of his SUV. However, he states that he has been guilty in the past of not restraining them in the car.

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