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Meeting with State Senator Bill Rabon
re: HB 930 "Puppy Mill Bill"
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2014, noon

Present: Bill Rabon, his assistant (?female, don't know her name?), and Sheriff John Ingram

Janie Withers, Dr Ernie Ward, Francesca Slaughter, Amy Schaefer, Cheri McLain, Anita August

Meeting was scheduled for noon.

Bill Rabon and his assistant joined the group at 12:36 p.m.

Rabon: I apologize for the wait. That is my fault. I always make my appointments for 12:30, lunch hour. My fault. Never on time.

If you are with the press (pointing at Anita August), that ain't allowed.

Withers: No, Anita is not with the press. She is my organizer of thoughts, and of information.

Rabon: I have legislative immunity. Means if I hear it or see it, it's a lie. I don't have to admit it. It has to do with legislation that may be pending or is written. Anything I write or what have you. By courts it can. You can say what I say. But I cannot recall. I will tell you . . . there may be other people in the state that are working on the same thing I am working on. It cannot be shared. A dozen legislators may be working on similar bills. . . . There may be others. Staff does not have the right to tell if it is going on.

Let's go.

Withers: Well, you called us to meet with you. You know the stand that we have taken.

Rabon: Yeah, and you know, I don't blame you. I am not at all impressed with what the House did. I don't like their bill. . . don't appreciate the methodology. I do not side with the Governor at all on this particular bill. I do side strongly with the side that North Carolina needs to be what . . . what, uh, was the crude attempt of a bill. That bill should never have been written. It came to the House without being vetted. It was bullied out of Committee by the Executive Branch. The Executive Branch had absolutely, absolutely no business sticking its nose in the Legislature and that sort of issue and for the Governor to want a particular piece of legislation because the First Lady wants it or because he wants it personally, to me is a flagrant violation of power.

Withers: Don't forget that 80% of the citizens in this state want a bill.

Rabon: Yes, they do. And I can tell you that 80% of the Assembly wants a bill. Over the decade if you recall, they haven't come up with a good one. It sometimes fails

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in the House and it sometimes fails in the Senate. Now, I will tell you what's wrong with that bill on the surface.

Number one: It absolutely does nothing , absolutely nothing. Any prudent jurist in this state will tell you that a lawyer worth his salt with that bill will get every single person that walks in there off the hook. They just will, because there is nothing there. And I will quote your Governor, he said, "Well, Bill, what in the HELL is wrong with a bill that just makes people feel good?" I said nothing. I'm not up there to make people feel good. I'm up there to do something that is good. Now, having said that, the dogs and cats of this state ain't going to get but one shot. Because things are so passionate. . . so passionate. They get only one shot. They cause such a stir among legislatures that you will get only one shot. And you get it now and then. Does that make sense?

Withers: No.

Rabon: Well, it should, it should, because you are thinking about dogs and cats. I'm thinking about all 2,000 bills that come through every session. Divide that by time, divide that by e-mail, divide that by phone calls, how much time and how much attention are legislators going to pay time and time again to the same thing? They'll say, "Didn't we do something about that last year?" Are you with me yet?

Janie W: So you're saying that amendments would be worthless?

Rabon: Do you understand, now I'm not trying to be condescending, but do you understand the amendment process?

Janie W: No, we don't. We are not politicians.

Rabon: There is no such thing as an amendment. An amendment, this is how it works. An amendment, alright, is you got HB 930 or something like that, an amendment is adding something to it. Adding like a section, ok? But everything is the same. You add this. The only way to do anything with HB930 is what is called a proposed committee substitute. That is, you take that is the name of the bill, you take the primary sponsors and you take every word in it and throw it away. And, you write entirely new bill. This is the legislature. That new bill, although it is called? 930. ("Yes.") And, say it passes. It goes back to the other body and is voted on or is not voted on and the only thing that other body does is they vote to accept it or not accept it. Then they can amend it. If they say we like everything about it but we really wanted this thing that was in the other bill. Then they amend that section. Then it comes back to the other body to vote again and accept or not accept. If not accepted, it goes to small committee to hammer out the differences. Then it becomes law. That's the process. That is the process.

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Now what's wrong with that bill. Starts in the first two to three lines. "Ten dogs . . . ten female dogs capable of breeding." Ya da ya. When are they capable of breeding, your honor? When in heat? The three days they accept a male. The four days they accept a male? The seven days they accept a male? How about the other 60 that aren't in heat? Are they capable of breeding? Your honor, we say they are not. In NC, in NC, if that case were taken to court, under a writ of habeas corpus, the ruling of that judge . . . ya'll know, Judge Marion Warren, Judge Marion Warren, ruled under writ of habeas corpus, threw it out, ...That would become the law of the land. Every Judge . . . it cannot be appealed to superior court. Cannot be appealed to superior court of appeals. It is dead, forever. That is the law of the land in NC, a habeas corpus state.

Withers: So what Judge Jolly did when he dismissed the abuse case of Springer....

Rabon: Judge Marion Warren¹ can consider a writ of habeas corpus², and it can't be appealed. That wasn't a case of habeas corpus. I'm not a lawyer.

Ward: But Bill, that is speculative intrepertation

Rabon: It is speculative. However, the HSUS is trying to use that in NC. As you well know, it is trying to use that to further their cause and we are not going to allow it. We do not want the judicial branch abusing their power.

This bill is set up for nothing but to try that again and again and again so that a judge in every county, in Orange county, in Pitt County, it does not matter, to do it for them. Now, they can do it with daylight, with slats, with water deprivation. They can do everything over and over and over, not unlike Southeastern Environmental Law firm when they take environmental issues and they postulate, but that was another project. That was another ten mile section of this road. That was another end of barter bridge. We are not worried so much about the legislation. We are worried about the judicial branch... can't be bastardized, if you will. And it can't spill over to the animal husbandry in this state, which is an 80 billion dollar industry, larger than other top 5 industries in the state.

[The Southeast Environment Law Forum . . . (???)³]

¹Marion R. Warren is a district court judge for the 13th Judicial District, serving Bladen, Brunswick and Columbus counties of North Carolina. He was appointed to the court by then-Governor Jim Hunt on August 9, 2000 to replace Ola M. Lewis. Warren was most recently re-elected in November 2012 to another four-year term that expires in 2016.

²A writ of habeas corpus (Latin: "you may have the body") is a writ (court order) that requires a person under arrest to be brought before a judge or into court. The principle of habeas corpus ensures that a prisoner can be released from unlawful detention—that is, detention lacking sufficient cause or evidence. The remedy can be sought by the prisoner or by another person coming to the prisoner's aid. This right originated in the English legal system, and is now available in many nations. It has historically been an important legal instrument safeguarding individual freedom against arbitrary state action.

³Not sure what Rabon was referencing here. Googled the topic, and I came up with: The Southeastern

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Janie: When you say that industry, you include puppies with pigs, cows, chickens., with agriculture. When you say puppies, it has nothing to do with pigs, cows or chickens. The only way to associate puppies with pigs is if you in the senate agree to do so. Puppies are puppies, not pigs.

Rabon: No, that is where you missed something. That is where if a judge ruled under habeas corpus rule that if this law is the law, it applies to dogs or cats and pigs. Pigs happen to have litters, pigs have four feet, pigs have two eyes, two ears.

Janie: You cannot do it without changing the law.

Rabon: No. It can be done. A judge can do it too.

Janie: You can, but you must change the law.

Rabon: You are wrong. A judge can do it too. This is not about dogs and cats.

Schaefer: But people are not breeding pigs in the same fashion that the puppy mill issue is addressing . .

Rabon: Oh, yes they are. Yes they are.

Schaefer: People don't go out and buy pigs. That is a bigger industry. This bill does not address commercial breeders who are already doing the responsible thing. They are already regulated. They are inspected, and where the Puppy Mill differs . . . the Puppy Mills aren't paying taxes.

Rabon: . . . you're right. You're right.

Schaefer: (after being interrupted several times by Rabon)..but you are not letting me complete my statement. People under the big ag, those breeders selling their pigs to the industry, they are paying taxes, they are regulated, they are inspected, and puppy mills differ from those in one way. Puppy mill breeders are not paying taxes.

Rabon: How do you know that?

Schaefer: There are no regulations. No way. They are taking \$800 cash for a puppy...

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Rabon: You're right, you're right. But . . .

Janie: Should be easy to find out. There were 13 puppy mill bill busts in the state. Check their tax records.

Rabon: But if you don't know if that person.....you are right. Same house of Representatives who passed this bill does not want to pass a bill on expansion of sales tax.

I want you to get in your car. Put a little gas in it. Drive to Sampson County and back. Particularly notice the billboards, you see the billboards. East Carolina. They love those pirates. Billboards read "tired of sitting still in traffic, think about never moving." Pictures of hogs. Where are those pictures? In the biggest hog producing county in the world.

Schaefer: Are you referring to gestation crates?

Rabon: Who put them there?

Schaefer: . . . gestation crates?

McLain: 930 has nothing to do with Ag animals. Nothing to do with gestation crates.

Rabon: I am going to do everything I can do to get you a damned good puppy mill bill.

Schaefer: Why haven't you acted on this issue in 4 years?

Rabon: I am going to get you a damned good puppy mill bill. You don't know what I have done.

McLain: You have not done anything about puppies. You have not introduced a bill. You have not written a bill. You have not sponsored a bill.

Rabon: You don't know that. You don't know what I have done in the last four years. Let me say this about that. This is an issue very dear to me. When I do it, it will be a good one. It will be done at right time. It will pass.

Schaefer: And when do you think that it's going to be the right time?

Rabon: When right time comes. The right time comes. If you think it is the right time you tell me why the bill did not pass.

Ward: I guess Bill, if you say the issue is near and dear to your heart, as you just stated, when you were first elected, you are not ever promised a second term. Why did you not act earlier? (interrupted)

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- Rabon: I can answer that very easily. Very easily. I never said I was never going to run on dogs and cats.
- Ward: But you said the issue was near and dear to your heart.
- Rabon: It is near and dear to my heart. You want to know the truth? YOU CAN'T PASS THE DAMN THING ERNIE! (SHOUTING).
- Withers: But you think a stronger one will pass?
- McLain: In 2009, they did introduce a stronger bill and they shot it out of the water in the House and Senate. And so that's why this is here now. Introduced stronger bills before and it could not pass.
- Rabon: Let me give you the basic facts. And, I am not going to be adversarial. I know what you guys want to do. If you don't get anything out of this today but 'Rabon is SON OF A BITCH' (shouting again), because you think I am, get this! Get it loud and you get it clear! It takes 26 Senators, it takes 61 Representatives, to pass anything, and then the Governor has to sign. It takes one jerk to stop it. Start figuring those odds.
- Ward: But in hindsight, don't you think it would have been a positive effort just to introduce legislation. Even if it was defeated, but it would have proven to your constituents, it would have proven to constituents that you are supportive about the issues.
- Rabon: No. you don't pass bills by losing. If you think Rayne Brown will ever pass another puppy mill bill to the house, you are wrong.
- Ward: Why? Why is that?
- Rabon: Because she's pissed off so many people.
- Ward: Because it's the one jerk?
- Rabon: One jerk has the power. You put so and so on my backside. You will never put another bill like that through my committee again. She will look at her feet and say, 'God I wish I had known before. I'm sorry. If I'd known, I would never have done this.'
- Janie W: But there are 100,000 voters, and the Senators have a responsibility when this many people want something done. Do you not feel you have somewhat of a responsibility to the voters to do what they want? to address the issue to the voters? We don't understand the process. This is an intimidating process to try to learn.
- Rabon: We are on bad footing here. What you guys want is to beat me up to do

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something that you want. And I'm going to try to give it to you. But you want it done tomorrow.

Withers: How long can it take? Now the Republican senators are at odds with the Republican governor.

Rabon: Not really. No . . . not really.

Withers: That's what I read in the newspaper. They're angry at him . . . he took this as a poster child project. Maybe to make him look good to the public. The voters like this bill. They like that the governor likes it. Is the Senate angry at him?

Rabon: Over a puppy mill bill?

Withers: It's a big deal to 85% of the people in this state.

Rabon: Over a puppy mill bill!

Withers: It is a big deal. 85% of the state's voters are in favor of it.

Rabon: We don't hold a grudge over a bill.

McLain: If you don't think that 930 is strong enough, you need to rewrite it? to make it stronger? So it is going to be good the first time out? How long are we talking? Because, how long are we talking?

Rabon: I can tell you this. The governor spoke to Senator Dr Trudy Wade yesterday. . . no, it was a lie. She was contacted yesterday. I'll have to check my calendar.

She and I are going to sit and talk with him about what our plans are, probably in the next 2 weeks. I have spent one Monday night football game with him, discussing it a few weeks ago. And, I have spoken with him on the phone, and with staff half a dozen times. Probably have discussed it with him at half dozen functions.

McLain: But theoretically, if you're trying to put a stronger bill in place, how much time will it take? How long a period of time will it take? . . . the year after?

Rabon: I will tell you right now I don't think it is going to pass in short session. There are reasons it is not. It is not going to pass the short session, it probably will not come up in short session.

Janie Withers: It is on the agenda, is it not?

Rabon: How do you know that?

Withers: It is not on the agenda? It was reported in the media, it's on the agenda. Is it

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- Rabon: on the general assembly agenda? That was reported to media in Raleigh.
Do you believe everything you hear in the media?
- Withers: I believe nothing I hear and half of what I see.
- Rabon: It is a live bill because it made crossover. It is not on the agenda
- Schaefer: It is on the general assembly website.
- Withers: You are saying it will not be addressed in short session? The danger of that is that there will be a change in players.
- Rabon: Don't get confrontational.
- Withers: I am not being confrontational. I truly am not.
- Rabon: Let me tell you why . . . It is not on the agenda. There is no make-believe agenda. No smoking gun. The House met last Saturday. I don't know what the hell they talked about, but they did their agenda.
- Schaefer: The House has already passed the bill. So it is pending the Senate.
- Rabon: No. This is what can be done in short session. All that can be done.. items that made crossover. It CAN be heard, does not have to be heard.
- Schaefer: But with 15 sponsors, don't you think one will bring it up gain?
- Rabon: No, I do not . . .
- Withers: You think not a single Senator will sponsor this bill? You are saying not a single Senator will sponsor this bill?
- Rabon: It's a live bill, it's sitting in the senate. THAT BILL IS NOT GOING TO PASS.
Are we through with that?
- McLain: I don't think so.
- Rabon: That bill is not going to pass. OK? Angels in heaven can not make that bill pass.
- Withers: Voters can change . . .
- Rabon: No, they can not.
- Withers: The voters can change that. They can change the players before the bill is heard.
- Rabon: They can't change that because there is not going to be a change in the Senate

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before that bill dies. Listen to me, folks, get this passion out of your heart and listen to me. Please . . .

Schaefer: Well, the passion comes from a good place. It comes from passion . . .

Rabon: It is passion not well thought out, not well done We will get you something that is better.

Withers: You have been saying this for four years. . . . our adult lives . . .

Rabon: (yelling) HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD REPUBLICANS THERE? ANSWER ME THAT: HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD THE REPUBLICANS THERE? HOW LONG? ANSWER ME . . . HOW LONG? YOU WERE WILLING TO KEEP THE DEMOCRATS THERE FOR 140 YRS. You give us 1/20 of that time and we will show you some good things that we have. But let me tell you something . . . You are trying to patch a billion and half dollars for medicaid because a former administration put booby traps throughout, knowing you were coming in and you were going to be strapped for money, knowing that you would not have the money. And cutting programs throughout this state? Don't think you are going to write and pass a puppy mill bill with no funding associated with it. It has no way of being put into play. . . . That bill does not say where it will go. It doesn't say who will enforce it. It has no money tied to it for enforcement.

Schaefer: But doesn't state law give the power to local law enforcement? . . . puppy mill busts that have been done were done based under animal cruelty laws.

Rabon: The law already has the power for animal abuse.

Schaefer: Animal cruelty . . . But why does it have to get to that step before it's enforced? . . . animal cruelty . . .

Withers: There's a big step between puppy mills and animal cruelty.

Rabon: Yes, there is . . . yes, there is. Now, let's go back to what we have to do. One will come out of the Senate whether I am re-elected or not. One will come out of the Senate and it's going to be a darned good one. I can tell you some things it is going to have in it. Don't put that in the press. Nobody knows this. Gas chambers will be illegal. Not mentioned in HB930. . . GOD DAMNED, folks. You did not mention gas chambers?

Schaefer: That is because it's not a puppy mill issue. That's a definite separate issue. Gas chambers are a separate issue. They have nothing to do with the puppy mill bill.

Rabon: There is more to life than puppy mills. We are talking about taking care of dogs and cats. . . .

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Schaefer: Do you know how many counties still have gas chambers? 11.

Rabon: So let's go out and shut down the puppy mills and gas them all!

Schaefer: You are being childish. There are 11 gas chambers in NC.

Rabon: You were being adversarial. I will be adversarial back to you.

Schaefer: We are here to ask you . . .

Rabon: We are going to have a 24 hr hotline statewide to report these abuses. Not just puppy mills. . . abuses.

Withers: There is already a hotline to report puppy mills.

Rabon: Where?

Withers: HSUS has a hotline.

Rabon: (Screaming) HSUS? HSUS! I don't give a damn about HSUS.

Schaefer: There is already an animal welfare bill that addresses cruelty. We don't need you to come in and add that to a puppy mill bill. We are focused on one particular issue. And that is why we are asking . . .

Rabon: Well, I am not a one issue man. . . I going to address the dogs and cats of this state. But somewhere in that 300 pages, I will address your one issue! . . . somewhere in that 300 pages, I will address your one issue, the one issue you may have. We are not going to run, nor will we ever pass a single one issue bill in the Senate or the House, because it is not good policy.

McLain: We are talking about puppy mills . . .

Rabon: There's general discontent here folks. You're worried about puppy mills. Are you not worried about catteries? Are you not worried about shoving 30 dogs and cats together in igloos. Shoving them in, pouring gas to them, then let them scream, defecate, and vomit! You're not worried about that?

Schaefer: There are already animal cruelty bill that addresses . . . comes under animal welfare. There's already animal abuse bill laws on the books.

Rabon: Does it cover gas chambers? Does it cover gas chambers?

Schaefer: No, it does not. There are only 11 gas chambers existing in NC. We are going county by county. . .

Withers: I can drive you to 6 mills, right here in this county.

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- Rabon: Law enforcement can shut down puppy mills.
Withers: They are not.
- Rabon: They can. (Pause) You will get a bill that will cover puppy mills. You will not get a puppy mill bill only. You're going to get a . . .
- Schaefer: Sheriff Ingram, I just want to ask from your standpoint, do you feel that you and law enforcement officers would benefit from regulation for puppy mills?
- McLain: Another way to put that too that is when you go in for a puppy mill bust, the amount of resources that go into the work. All of the officers being there all day. Last puppy mill bust, it started at 8 am and went to 10pm. Law enforcement was paid to be involved in that. Would it be more worth it if you had regulation to try these people and maybe to get some money back from them, through the court system? It'd be a way to recoup the taxpayers money, if you had . . .
- Ingram: Certainly, but that is only one piece of it. For every call we get about a possible puppy mill, I get 20-30 calls about animal abuse, or animal cruelty, at isolated locations that does not necessarily involve puppy mills.
- Withers: But you already have that law for animal abuse.
- Ingram: We have some laws, but in my opinion, laws are not effective when it comes to animal cruelty. It certainly could be addressed, and modified . . . to put some teeth in it. There's no teeth in it now. And to put together some type of regulation of puppy mills, as well as adding language in there to allow us to be more effective regarding animal cruelty. Law enforcement could be much more effective if we could deal with these issues, and to keep someone from offending again. It has some teeth to it. It could be stronger.
- McLain: Senator Rabon, I will ask you again, if you would write a bill and you would write it with more teeth in it, when would you start working on it, and when would we expect to have it?
- Rabon: We actually started working on this in the last session before this abomination came through the house.
- McLain: But still, what kind of time frame are we talking? A year, two years?
- Rabon: I would tell you that uh . . . I would tell you what . . . I'm gong to expect this, I'm not going to tell you what's going to happen. I'm looking through my notes that I couldn't find last time when I was talking with the Sheriff. I'm looking through my notes, here's one from Andrew Brock. (flipping through his cell phone as if looking for something). Five notes came through since 6 am this morning. He is chairman of Ag, and he sits on the committee in the Senate that takes care of these things. Senator Brock, Senator Rabon, Senator Wade, and

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Senator Houck (?)

Schaefer: You said this bill has no teeth. The other two puppy mill bills were stronger. . . Senate bill 733 and HB 460. They were introduced in 2009 and had much more teeth.

Rabon: I was not there then.

Schaefer: I understand.

Rabon: Although you folks did accuse me of voting against the pupph mill bill. I was not even there.

Schaefer: As I was saying . . .

Rabon: I . . .

Schaefer: As a politician, you open yourself up to that. There have been previous bills with more teeth that failed.

Rabon: It was you who accused me.

Ward: Now that I don't agree with. Make true statements.... Senator Rabon has clearly stated that 930 is tabled.

Schaefer: He says he has received, he got heat for a bill he did not work on.

Rabon: This is . . . (still flipping through his cell phone as if looking for messages). This is from 1/7, and we met. The next meeting, 4pm, Jan 28. If you think I am not doing anything . . . I am taking a DAMN DAY OFF TO DRIVE TO RALEIGH FOR NOTHING BUT THAT MEETING.

Ward: What is the time line? What is the time line? All Cheri is asking is for a time line. When do you think . . .

Rabon: We have not caucused. We are going to caucus the following day at 2 pm with the Republican Senate. . . . We will have a big blackboard. Sometime next week, we all get email requesting from all the Senators, please give me our top five priorities. All Senators give their top five priorities. Then, a staffer will tabulate them. Those will be the big ones: Medicaid, medicare, teacher pay.

Ward: I got that . . . not an issue.

Rabon: Puppy mills will be on there, I guarantee that one or two Senators will mention it. I know of three. I'm not telling you who. That is caucus information. We will vote on every one of them. I will be lying to you if I say that we're going to get the majority of 33 senators agree your bill is important.

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There's no crystal ball. The Senate will make a statement about puppy mills. This will be our plan concerning animals, and the puppy mills, the dogs and the cats . . . every day, this is going to be our plan for 2015.

Schaefer: Is that before or after the upcoming election?

Rabon: That's after the upcoming election.

Schaefer: ???

Rabon: We are not going to put a bill out there until we talk to the Governor, ranking members of the House, interest groups, the sheriff, the judicial branch. All sitting at one table . . .

That's how you write good legislation.

Ward: If you had said "I'm all over it," I'd say awesome! As a vet, I am disappointed that you just started working the last session on this issue that is so near to your heart.

Rabon: Ernie, you're retired.

Ward: No, I'm not. I have sold my practice.

Rabon: Put your butt out there on the block. See how easy it is.

McLain: We are not trying to oversimplify the issue nor the political process. We realize there is money involved.

Rabon: And there is LOT OF MONEY INVOLVED.

McLain: But for four years, there has been time to be working on a bill that would have some credibility, yet it was shelved. If this is such an important issue, why is it just coming up now and getting pushed forward for another year? It became a hot topic in 2009.

Rabon: OK, in 2009, this could have been a hot topic. Yes, and those were some of the worse economic times we've seen since the Great Depression.

McLain: I understand that.

Rabon: I am not sure you do.

McLain: I do understand . . . I'm just saying, if you rewrite it. Push it forward another year because you want to rewrite it to be stronger. It would be our hope that this bill would have been already. If it was that important, and you saw it

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coming down the pike, it should have strengthened appropriately.

Rabon: We were informed that that bill would never leave the House.

Withers: How did this bill get through the House?

Rabon: Because the nature of the beast of the House, they are a bunch of "PUSSIES" (screaming). They got political heat. They said we can no longer sit on this. We know the senate will not pass it because it is a piece of crap, so we will send it to them and they will take the heat. Ladies and gentlemen, that is politics 101. They are the big boys and girls. We will put it in their lap. Let them get their butts kicked. Let them take the heat. They passed the bill on to the Senate to take the heat. They knew it would not pass the Senate.

Withers: So, this may not be on your list of priorities but to the citizens of NC, it is up there. You are an elected official, you are a public servant. We elected you with our votes, to represent people in NC, not just yesterday, not this year. NC has become the magnet for puppy mills sucking the crap of the earth here. You're seeing puppies with genetic defects. We see the humanitarian side. To the citizens of NC you're our voice.

Rabon: Thank you.

Ingram: Can I say something? Let me try to explain with my limited knowledge what goes on in Raleigh. Being part of the Sheriff's Association, we battled with video poker for years. We had some setbacks. We had some wins. As a voice of one of over 100 of us, I spoke out against video poker. As a new sheriff, I saw some things that were important . . . important to our community, and important to me. We would talk about topics that were important to us. It took time for me as a new sheriff. A new sheriff goes in with zero clout. They had to build the trust and alliances that were so important, to get their respect. I had to build clout. This is why it is important to understand. It's just like with me, being Sheriff here, I get hit with hundreds of things a day. It's all important to me. It is overwhelming. It would be overwhelming to Superman. So, I try to put myself in his place with what he has to deal with. After talking with him the other day, I feel very hopeful about where we are today.

After talking with him, I feel we cannot focus on the past. What does that accomplish? We can't sit here and think about past decisions. We face that as sheriff, we face that in the county. What is the best course of action? What he shared with me and the possibility of it being discussed in the fall was more hopeful than anything that I know of now. What I said to Janie earlier, was voters can put him out of office. That's not going to put . . . that's not going to pass that bill. The person you put in his place tries to put the bill in place . . . think of how long it will take them to get the support that they need to pass that bill. That is our government . . . and they will not have the clout to put it in place.

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- Withers: And the way we change our government is through votes.
- Ingram: That is right. You change the people. You do not change the process. The process has been in place longer than us. You do change the people but you have the same situation. You have not changed it. I am hopeful. He has not been anything but truthful with me. With assurances he gives me, I feel confident that we will have what we need to allow law enforcement to put things in place that will make it better. That's my belief. Do you think I want to jump into a topic like this? I want to see those people we took down be punished and not just move somewhere else. We cannot continue to hammer the past if we expect to do anything to change the future.
- Ward: But with respect, Sheriff Ingram, we are in the present. This is a live bill. The issue is pertinent today. We are saying we do not like what is going on with this bill. I respect what you have said but I would, I don't think HB930 is a thing of the past. It's something that will have to be killed in the next couple of sessions.
- Rabon: It is going to die before the 1st day of July. We may or may not have a proposed substitute. That bill, legislatively, has for all practical purposes the day it went over to senate it was dead. It made great press because it got the world off the back of the House because they did not have the guts to say this is not a good thing. Did not have guts when it went to Ag or sit with Governor when 1st lady was in chamber lobbying, which was against all laws, inviting legislators to the mansion to lobby, which is against all law.
- Schaefer: The first lady takes up a cause, whether the governor's wife or president's wife, childhood obesity, cancer, animal issues
- Rabon: There is a strong line between opinion and lobbying. When you pick up the phone and you are in a position of power and call individual legislators and offer advice or praise, you are under the law lobbying.
- Withers: If she broke the law, why was she not charged with breaking the law?
- Rabon: Maybe she did, maybe she did not. What she did was borderline.
- Withers: If what she did broke the law, she broke the law. She should be charged.
- Withers: Puppy mills are borderline.
- Rabon: What you are doing is borderline. But it's not because you can say I am acting not as a representative of a group.
- Withers: We're voters. We are meeting with our Senator who we elected. We are discussing an issue with our Senator. How is that borderline?

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Rabon: I'm going to tell you one more time. Let me back up. Let me blow my own horn. I have been there for three years. I'm in the top five . . . The best shot you folks ever have you are talking to!

Schaefer: And it has taken nearly four years for you to be willing to meet with us.

Rabon: When did you ask me?

Schaefer: I have sent emails, I left you voice messages, and I've sent you snail mail invitations.

Rabon: And I don't even know your name!

Schaefer: That is sad because I was your customer for eight years.

Rabon: And you don't like me.

Schaefer: Well, that's . . . the flip side of an issue.

Ward: This is not personal.

Rabon: Not to me. A lot of this . . . It's very personal. I have had tremendous personal attacks.

Schaefer: But not by me.

Rabon: No. But by people of similar passion. And, it is unfounded. It's from a similar kind of passion. It's unfounded.

You don't have to like me. You don't have to vote for me. Vote against me. That has nothing to do with what I do.

Schaefer: Some of the frustration that you're seeing is the lack of you addressing animal issues in the past - like cockfighting.

Rabon: Wait a minute. You sat and you took me down because I was interested in all animals. You only wanted puppy mills. Now you talk about cockfighting!

Schaefer: You're splitting hairs.

Withers: We aren't getting anywhere on the issue.

Rabon: You will get there. And, it will be in the 2015 session, and you will like what you see, because . . .

Withers: When? That's what Cheri asked you.

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Ward: Which session?

Rabon: In the long session, in 2015. It will have associated with it funding. In 2015, the Long Session, there will be a better, stronger bill introduced, and it will have teeth, there will be funding for it

The Chairman of Finance holds the purse strings . . . very powerful

Want to take the easy way out? I have two ways. You will think, 'that is nicest man,' and you just got "scrawed." Here's what I can do. I can go to the Senate. You know what. Folks are putting heat on me. We're going to run this bill and pass it. I am chairman of finance. Do you know what the Senate is going to say? You better vote for it because you won't get a bill out of short session. None of my bills will pass. If I am supporting it, so we pass it. Everyone is out there singing kum ba ya. You have a bill that does not have one penny of appropriation. Not one penny. A piece of paper, that's all that is. No appropriation. No way to enforce it. Who to enforce it?

Withers: Laws are enforced by law enforcement and funded by the state of NC. Sheriff Ingram goes in, you have a broken law, he has power to enforce the law.

Ingram: It has to be done the right way or you have nothing. They are right back on the streets. And they're back on the streets again. You saw this with drug bills.

McLain: If you are rewriting the bill, when will your constituents get a chance to see this new bill that you are proposing? Do you have loosely based timeline?

Rabon: Bills come out of bill drafting. There's a starting date, and a final date.

McLain: 2014?

Rabon: Maybe 2014. I will get those on a blue piece of paper. Sometime. All bills must be in bill drafting by such and such a date.

McLain: So, there's a possibility of a bill in 2014 . . . Are you capable of getting it in by the timeline? Let's say by August . . .

Rabon: All bills have to be in after session starts.

Ward: The next session, January, 2015?

McLain: So you have no idea when something will be released to public for us to look at.

Rabon: Absolutely not.

Ward: You say two options?

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Rabon: Option two? We pass a bill and get non-recurring appropriation and you would say, 'GOD A MIGHTY, look what they gave us. They gave us \$4mm in this. They are super.' Next year that bill is dead as a mackerel!

As a non-recurring budget item, it just died. You think you got something and all of a sudden you got nothing. No money.

You think you got something . . . and all you got is a piece of paper. And the Sheriff says . . .

McLain: But if you write the bill, the money is in there til you die?

Rabon: This stuff is complicated. It is all written by lawyers. You have a budget, all you see in that budget is something that has changed. Once we put this in with funding as a recurring item it is there forever. It might have been passed thirty years ago, forty years ago . . . it's always there. It's in there in perpetuity until someone changes it. The law says there shall be this much appropriated . . . We are going to fund this thing as a recurring item, if you don't put that in there, it is dead. We could hoodwink you on it that way.

Slaughter: So, Dr Rabon, quick question: If you draft a stronger bill with more teeth, how confident do you feel that the other Senators will agree with you?

Rabon: Senator Wade and I and Senator Jackson (Chair from Ag.) We'll get 48 votes.

The bill will be passed, 100%, if it's sponsored by me. Once the Senate votes on it, it has to pass the house. It's that simple, folks.

Withers: ???

Ingram: I want to ask something real quick. When you and I talked, you said that the special interest groups will be brought in. When will the special interest groups be called in?

Rabon: Yes, after we've met with the Governor.

Ingram: What's to say if the Senate passes it, it passes in the House?

Rabon: If sponsored by me, 100%! It's that simple folks. I don't mean to brag.

Withers: The simple part is if we don't have laws that prevent us from going from neglect to animal abuse charges ??? Sheriff Ingram does not have the power he needs.

Rabon: He will.

Withers: He does not now.

Rabon: My first term, I would have lost. Because the day that I was ???

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- Ward: That is speculative. You can say that. You can say that, but I also know that strange things happen in this world. I share her sentiments. We are meeting with you because you are a veterinarian and our Senator.
- Rabon: Did three House members meet with me because I was veterinarian?
- Janie: Probably. They would ask your opinion because you are a veterinarian.
- Ward: Three house members? How often to you ask a House member their opinion?
- Rabon: Oh, when I'm up there? 15-20 times per day. . . every day.
- Ward: Now that strikes me as very odd. Very odd.
- Ingram: It's interesting to me. One group taking hot potato rather than getting all together to discuss. Now I heard on more than one occasion today, once together, they would go to governor to ask their support. Getting back to my question, once that happens . . . is there any possible time frame?
- Rabon: What are you getting at?
- Ingram: After you meet with the Governor and his staff, is there time frame like this calendar year? Are talking about? 2014? will interest groups get a look at that?
- Rabon: It will not be drafted til late 2014.
- Schaefer: If the elections happen, mid-draft, what happens to that draft? If the parties sponsoring it are not re-elected, then what happens to the draft?
- Rabon: It does not go anywhere. It is a draft. There are stacks that high that never go anywhere.
- Slaughter: Then it will not be drafted before the election?
- Rabon: It does not matter.
- Withers: It does if the players change.
- Rabon: That bill cannot be introduced til we go back into session.
- Ward: So your thought is that if you stay in power, we will get a very solid bill.
- Rabon: You will get a solid bill. Trudy Wade calls me every day. I am afraid she is going to have a litter of puppies herself if we don't do something. (laughing)
- Schaefer: She seems to have quieted down a bit.

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Rabon: She is nice person. She is on your side. She is tough.

Schaefer: I would not say she is on our side.

McLain: Senator Rabon, we would not be so skeptical if we had seen you take any interest sooner.

Rabon: You can voice your disappointment. I will tell you one more time: you EARN clout in Raleigh.

McLain: Your power did not start this month. You could have done this two years ago.

Ward: I certainly respect what you say, Bill, however, if I elected a pediatrician to the Senate, I would have expected them to champion child-related issues. That's why everyone is sort of reaching on this issue. If you had said, "I'm working on it." If you'd said, "I'm laddering up."

Rabon: Why did you not call and ask me, Ernie? I am not good at blowing my horn everywhere I go. You don't walk in to Raleigh with any clout. You earn it.

BR's asst. We were just talking about this yesterday. Yes, he does a lot of good things and doesn't blow his own horn.

Ward: I think a lot of people do a lot of good things. Just one failed bill from you would have been expected.

McLain: It doesn't make them bad, that's their passion. But in past few years, calls and emails to your office were never answered, by staff, because I was calling specifically about a puppy mill issue. And I was ignored, and a lot of people have also been ignored. We were ignored. The message sent to us was that you were not interested, and that's why we were being ignored.

Rabon: I don't have staff, I have one person, eight hours per day, and she's a damned good one . . . to schedule and to answer 400 emails. She has to scroll through there to determine: Are emails from my district? Most don't include name and address. Address, zip code, area code are checked. The first thing when we see an e-mail is we try to determine, did it even come from someone within my district? And if I get a blast e-mails, maybe 75 that say the same thing . . . they get deleted, immediately. Our system doesn't . . . Any from advocacy groups . . . She is going to look at blast emails. After three emails with same subject, they are dumped. Do you understand?

Ward: Yes.

Schaefer: We're not here from animal advocacy groups. We're . . . ???

Rabon: Ernie, do you get that?

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Ward: Yes, I get that.

Schaefer: But a piece of snail mail, with a return address . . .

Rabon:

Ward: And I get that . . . it's a good excuse . . .that is a good excuse.

OK, to summarize here, at this point, "A" . . . I clearly now understand that 930 is a nonstarter in the senate. is not going to happen. I personally feel that the puppy mill bill is not of interest to Bill Rabon. I did not vote for you because of a puppy mill issue. I do on personal opinion, ???, Third, the far reaching animal welfare bills are difficult to pass. I would not dare to over-simplify this. Those bills take years to be nuanced through the House and Senate. I'm glad that you're moving in that direction. I'm glad that you're optimistic that you can introduce it, and get it passed like that. . . .

Rabon: You can't write a bill, I don't care what it is. You can't write a bill that has anything to do with anything other than finance . . . You cannot write a bill that deals with anything other than finance unless you bring players to the table. Have to have votes before you write it. And that is what did not happen with that bill. Those three House members did not have their votes before they wrote it. OK? They had darn good intentions.

Ward: And, that's where it gets complicated.

Schaefer: That third edition of HB 930 that encompassed the AKC standards regulations.

Rabon: I have no idea . . .

Schaefer: That third edition of HB 930 was a compromise in order to get it through the House, it was my understanding, because the AKC was in opposition to the bill. Standards were taken from AKC website, so that it took away some of the opposition, from the Port Council, and the Farm Bureau , and it allowed the NC Vet Association to have an opinion about it. Because it is very basic, as you said. The wording to compromise. This is our shot to have something happen. That is what we are asking for.

Rabon: I cannot pass that bill. That is the truth. If you want me to run it, you sit there and tell me you want me to run it, knowing it will not pass. That you will support me, you will waive banners for me saying he is greatest man who ever lived, look me in the eye, and you tell me. I will do it for YOU. It will fail!

Withers: Why is there a vote? Why bother to vote if you have so much power?

Ward: They're not going to vote.

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Rabon: If I could win it, it would have been won. Please, listen to that!

Ingram: This is like the issue with immigration. Issue with worker extension. E-verify. Thirty days can work. Voted to extend six months. Governor vetoed it. Did reach to get support veto to ensure it would stay intact. It loses some of the power it has to get something passed, some of the clout needed (talked about governor, Guilford county sheriff and lack of support . . . nothing to do with our discussion.)

Ward: He knew that was going to be a foregone conclusion.

Ingram: He was trying his best, desperately, to get the support. If I didn't know that, from talking to AJ . . .

AJ is the Sheriff in Guilford County.

Withers: The conversation here is ended. We are not happy with it. The trust element has been broken. The saddest part for me is that the trust is broken, it is done. I have given it three years. and I voted for you. I can no longer support you as my Senator. It's sad.

Rabon: I can tell you this. I can tell you this. If I do not have the support of your group, I will still do what I do.

Withers: I do not trust where I voted the last time.

Rabon: If you are a one-issue person, I am not a one-issue senator.

Meeting ended. All left the meeting area and dispersed to their cars.

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