

Testimony of Thomas Maiorino
Committee on Oversight and Reform
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy
June 15, 2022

My name is Thomas Maiorino, I reside in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey with my wife Monica. I am the father of 3 boys. My youngest son, Robert turned 12 years old in 2011. After years of asking for a dog, my wife and I decided to rescue a dog from a southern shelter for my son's birthday. After researching online, we adopted a mixed breed mut that Robbie and his 2 older brothers named Rooney.

Rooney swiftly became a loved member of our family. A bit rambunctious, she was just what a 12-year-old boy needed. She loved to run, chasing anything that moved in the yard. By all measures, we took great care to ensure Rooney had a healthy and happy life. We took her on daily walks, sometimes three a day and hikes on park trails. We monitored her diet, made sure she was seen by the veterinarian as needed, and that she received all her shots.

Because Rooney was a bit rambunctious and we live in a wooded area where there is a fair amount of wildlife, we were constantly concerned about Rooney getting bit by fleas or ticks. We consulted with our veterinarian shortly after getting Rooney to determine the best way to protect Rooney against fleas and ticks. We used a variety of flea and tick prevention methods for the first few years we had Rooney. We had changed veterinarians in approximately 2013 or 2014 and it was this new veterinarian who subsequently recommended we combat fleas and ticks with the Seresto flea and tick collar when consulted on our options.

We heeded that advice and purchased Seresto collars from our local Petsmart. The collars are intended to provide protection for up to 8 months. We noticed that after affixing the collar to

Rooney's neck, she began to itch and at first had her treated and later tested for allergies. We took Rooney to the vet several times during 2018, seeking to find a cause for the ever increasing itching. After several visits and multiple medications, the vet was unable to determine the cause and we switched vets in 2019 to seek further assistance and where they provided Allergy shots and other medications to address the worsening itching and related symptoms. Rooney's behavior became more erratic as the months wore on, she began licking her paws so feverously that they would bleed and she also developed bleeding patches on her stomach during this time. Ultimately, in October 2020, Rooney suffered a horrendous grand mal seizure in the presence of my spouse and myself. The damage done by the seizure was irreversible, she was a shell of her former self, and ultimately, the family decided the most humane thing would be to put Rooney to sleep at the age of 9.

In early March 2021, I read an article in the USA Today about Seresto Pet Collars resulting in the deaths of 1,700 pets without any warning from the EPA. I sought out legal representation not because I wanted financial compensation, but because I took great pain to care for Rooney. The final 18 months of her life were agonizing to watch. If I could help prevent another family from going through what my family went through, I wanted to act. I am here today in furtherance of that effort and I appreciate the Committee taking the time to investigate this matter.

Thank you.