



RESOURCES TO COMBAT ANTI-BREEDER HARASSMENT & RETALIATION: WEBINAR Q&A



You mentioned you would provide information on possible hot spots. What does that look like, and how is that information distributed?

We anticipate sharing maps and/or graphs to summarize information in easy-to-understand formats. We also plan to utilize our current legislative alert system to provide geographically-targeted regional alerts.



If I know of someone who's being harassed, should I send the info in for them?

No, it should only be reported and explained by the person who experienced the circumstances. This helps avoid duplication of reporting, and skewing data, etc. Please make victims aware that they can submit their report at <https://akcgr.org/akc/reportharassment>.



How do you follow up on reports?

The report form asks permission for staff to follow up with a person who makes a report to us. Depending on the information shared, that person may be contacted for further details if they have authorized the follow up.



How can you be sure you don't get false reports?

Because this is a new initiative, some of our practices will be learned through experience. At a minimum, we will explore credibility through research



Will you use our names or address information when providing reports?

Respecting the privacy of club members is very important to the AKC. All information shared publicly will be made anonymous.



How are you going to provide this info to law enforcement?

The Task Force hopes to serve as an organizer and analyst of information shared with us. We hope to discern patterns of harassment or political retribution should they occur. That is the information we will communicate.

We will not be contacting law enforcement based on individual reports. Of course, a person may decide to do that themselves, and we will remind them of that option, especially if they feel that they are in danger or their property is in danger of being harmed.



What if I haven't been harassed, but I think that my local law enforcement or animal control officers are biased against breeders?

Anti-breeder experiences of this nature may be communicated to lawmakers to support potential legislation ensuring legal consequences for discriminatory behavior, and to enforcement department heads to share concerns.



What if I have a neighbor who is harassing me? (How do I know if it's an animal rights activist or just a cranky neighbor? Ultimately, does it matter?)

It's important to remember, the task force is looking to discern patterns of harassment or retaliation by animal rights radicals who adamantly oppose the breeding of dogs. We will develop specific resources to address common issues reported to us. We will encourage those not connected with that political movement to be approached as an individual in need of education.



Do you have to be a club member to participate? Do you have to register dogs with AKC to participate?

Initially, the task force will be focusing on and supporting AKC breeders and enthusiasts. However, we take an interest in all cases of harassment/ retaliation.

Q How do you determine whether complaints are justified, especially if you don't do an inspection?

Publicly available information will be used to verify reports.

Q This is all nice, but does it really do anything to help solve the problem?

Our experience shows that lawmakers often respond to anecdotal stories with legislation. It's helpful to substantiate claims of breeder harassment with quantifiable data. We believe this will improve policymakers' understanding of problems and help develop policies necessary to address these issues

Q Does the task force want reports on past incidents?

Yes, we would like to hear about past incidences of harassment if they occurred within the past year. Details may be provided at <https://akcgr.org/reportharassment>.

Q When I first started breeding dogs, I lived in a subdivision where the ordinance limit was three dogs. My kennel grew well over that limit. The most trouble I had is when the dogs were outside. Several young children in the subdivision created havoc intentionally with the dogs, including climbing trees and shooting plastic pellets at them. Older neighbors would call authorities. Choosing the dogs over the community, I moved to a life where I could legitimately own multiple dogs. But I felt harassed in the subdivision. Should I have proceeded with a harassment complaint?

We urge compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including private subdivision covenants, to ensure that any claims that may arise are not barred because of noncompliance. Because this set of facts involved behaviors not likely stemming from animal rights activists, an attorney from your jurisdiction and knowledgeable about your local laws would have been best to review the facts of the case to determine if filing a legal complaint would have been appropriate.

Q How does one find a lawyer who may specialize in animal issues?

Animal law is a specialized field of law that affects or is influenced by most traditional areas of law, including contracts, criminal law, torts, administrative law, trusts...even family law and constitutional law. The Task Force recognizes that there may be a need to identify attorneys with appropriate subject matter expertise. To that end, we are considering the development of a directory that would list attorneys based on what state(s) they practice in and the applicable experience they have. AKC does not provide recommendations on specific attorneys. In the meantime, members of your local AKC-affiliated club, and/or leaders of your state's [AKC federation](#) (if one exists in your state), may be able to recommend someone if you are currently looking to identify a local attorney.

Q To what extent across the nation do you see AR issues?

Unfortunately, we are seeing AR issues in all fifty states.

Q What states are we talking about [during the August 20 webinar]?

During the webinar, we provided examples of harassment or retribution from New Hampshire and Connecticut.

Q Can national breed clubs be more active in helping older breeders or breeders falling on hard times?

The AKC encourages club members to look out for their fellow club members and to support those who are falling on hard times, physically or financially. This outreach is appropriate for both breed clubs and local all-breed clubs. AKC GR is aware of efforts underway to provide more specific guidance in this area.

Q I have in my notes from the webinar that high profile events can be prime targets for harassment and retaliation, and that in 2019 and 2020 there were seizure of dogs during Westminster's Best in Show? Did this happen?

High-profile seizures were executed during Westminster Kennel Club's 2019 and 2020 show. These enforcement actions—which were executed at the breeders' kennels in their home states, not at the events—likely were timed to detract from the high-profile, pro-breeder media coverage of the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show.

Q Is it better to introduce yourself to law enforcement in your area before complaints are lodged?

As the adage says, "all politics are local." Assuming you follow all laws and ordinances, it would be ideal to establish a relationship with local law enforcement, animal control and lawmakers.

Q Our local newspaper occasionally publishes letters to the editor that are explicitly anti-breeder and anti-AKC. We have tried to respond with our own letter to disprove those claims, but we've never received a response, much less been published. This has happened several times. Any thoughts?

This is an excellent question about media coverage. Our suggestion is to invite the paper to cover your community events, shows, agility trials, etc. To help garner favorable coverage, we recommend working to establish positive relationships with a few reporters. Then, if something negative needs addressing, the likelihood of being able to turn to them to assist with printing a response is enhanced. AKC's Communications Department may also be able to provide assistance. They may be reached at communications@akc.org.

Q Will a recording of the August 20 webinar be made available? Will you provide the PowerPoint for future use?

A recording of the August 20 webinar is available at:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/7544615002902004747>

Slides from the webinar are available at:
https://cqrengage.com/akc/file/OFehq95lp4g/Anti-Breeder%20Harassment%20%20Retaliation%20Task%20Force_Presentation%208.20%20vFINAL.pdf

Please also be advised that future webinars are currently being planned.

**TO LEARN MORE, VISIT:
WWW.AKCGR.ORG/HARASSMENT**