



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

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Vice President
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The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science & Transportation
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science & Transportation
Subcommittee on Aviation Operations
Safety & Security Subcommittee
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science & Transportation
716 Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science & Transportation
Subcommittee on Aviation Operations
Safety & Security Subcommittee
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

September 20, 2018

Re. Inclusion of HR 4577 (Domestic Explosives Detection Canine Capacity Building Act) in Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act (S. 1405)

Dear Chairmen Thune and Blunt, and Ranking Members Nelson and Cantwell:

Last fall, testimony before a joint subcommittee hearing of the House Oversight and Government Reform and Homeland Security Committees revealed that the United States government is relying heavily on foreign outsourcing to provide one of our most essential frontline defenses against terrorist attacks: highly specialized explosives detection canines. Explosives detection canines are a critical resource used by U.S. troops overseas for force protection, and by federal, state and local law enforcement and private security throughout the United States to assure the safety of citizens at airports, stadiums, political gatherings and other public venues.

No technology is more efficient, accurate or cost effective than the explosives detection canine. Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, worldwide demand for high quality explosives detection dogs has skyrocketed and international suppliers have been unable to keep up.

The Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security indicate that 80-90% of U.S. explosives detection dogs are imported from overseas. No other aspect of national security is so heavily outsourced to foreign producers. Without domestic solutions, American security will become increasingly captive to potential market disrupters such as

geopolitical disturbances, animal health epidemics, and our ability to obtain the best explosives detection dogs in highly competitive international markets.

On August 28-30, 2018, the American Kennel Club (AKC) hosted the second annual U.S. Detection Dog Conference in Durham, North Carolina. The purpose of this conference was to bring together leaders in all impacted fields to collaboratively develop solutions to this potential security crisis. Attendees included some two hundred experts –including policymakers, military, law enforcement, industry experts, top dog breeders and trainers, scientists, animal husbandry/welfare experts and others.

The consensus of experts recognizes that a domestic solution does **not** require resorting to government breeding programs. U.S. experts have the ability, expertise and desire to establish decentralized American breeding, raising and training facilities that not only meet America's needs, but can also produce some of the best explosives detection dogs in the world.

However, this solution must also include the establishment of sound technical, behavioral and medical standards, which will require insight and experience from both private sources and government agencies. HR 4577, the Domestic Explosives Canine Capacity Building Act, which passed the House in January of 2018, provides a model to achieve this goal. Specifically, HR 4577 directs the Transportation Security Agency to establish a working group of representatives from TSA, the Department of Homeland Security, national canine associations with expertise in breeding and pedigree, universities with experience related to explosives detection canines and canine breeding, and domestic canine breeders and vendors to establish these standards and present them to DHS.

National security is not a matter to delay. We, the American Kennel Club and attendees of the U.S. Detection Dog Conference, urge you to help protect national security and collaborative U.S. sourced explosive detection canines, by including HR 4577 in the text of Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act (S. 1405).

We appreciate your consideration and thank you for your assistance. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely yours,

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Cc: Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation