

BREED-SPECIFIC LEGISLATION DOESN'T WORK

(BSL) is any proposal that seeks to ban or place severe restrictions on owners of a particular breed of dog or dogs with certain physical characteristics, regardless of whether or not the dog is a problem in the community. BSL is commonly proposed by lawmakers in response to a specific attack by a dangerous animal or a wave of irresponsible dog ownership issues in a community. BSL proponents believe that regulating or banning a specific breed of dog is a quick and easy solution to animal control problems. However:



BSL DOES NOT PROTECT COMMUNITIES

Instead, it places restrictions only on the owners of certain types of dogs. Under BSL, the list of regulated breeds or types could grow every year without ever addressing irresponsible owners. In addition, an owner intent on using his or her dogs for malicious purpose (such as dogfighting) will simply be able to switch to another type of dog, continuing to jeopardize public safety.



BSL IS DIFFICULT TO ENFORCE

It compels law enforcement officials to focus their valuable time on breed identification, requiring expert knowledge of the individual breeds. It is very difficult for public officials to enforce such provisions in a fair and effective manner. This is compounded when the law includes restrictions based on characteristics of breeds or mixed breeds.



BSL IS UNFAIR TO RESPONSIBLE OWNERS

Many owners of targeted breeds are extremely responsible and loving towards their pets. BSL may prevent them from freely interacting with, showing, breeding, or providing pet therapy with their dogs at schools, hospitals, and nursing homes. Some forms of BSL can cause financial hardship to responsible owners due to higher compliance costs.



BSL COULD INCREASE COSTS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Because of residents' inability to comply with BSL, shelter operations costs could rise as targeted breeds are relinquished. In addition, otherwise-adoptable dogs of targeted breeds generally cannot be adopted out and would have to be euthanized at the shelter at public expense.



A BETTER SOLUTION IS AVAILABLE!

Adopt breed-neutral laws that address the deeds of specific dogs and their owners, rather than banning or restricting an entire breed. Uniformly-enforced animal control laws require all owners, regardless of the breed of dog they own, to be responsible. When paired with strongly-enforced animal control laws (such as leash laws) and increased public education efforts to promote responsible dog ownership, breed-neutral dangerous dog laws better protect communities.

www.akc.org

To learn more, visit
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