



Position Statement on Breed Specific Legislation

The American Dog Breeders Association Inc. is an all breed registry established in 1909 to promote the study, breeding, exhibiting, and advancement of purebred dogs. The ADDBA strongly opposes any legislation that determines a dog to be "dangerous" based on specific breeds or phenotypic classes of dogs.

Breed-specific legislation (BSL) comes in many forms, from extra insurance policies and special licenses, to outright bans of particular breeds. It generally targets a small set of dog breeds or breed types. It attempts to curb dog bites and dog attacks by implementing policies focused specifically on those breeds. And it is always a complete failure - technically and morally.

The ADDBA believes that dog owners should be responsible for their dogs and that law should impose appropriate penalties on irresponsible owners. Communities must establish a well-defined procedure for dealing with dogs proven to be dangerous which includes, if necessary, the destruction of such animals. In order to be effective, if the purpose of such legislation is to reduce dog bites and improve public safety; such legislation should not be breed-specific.

Some people mistakenly believe that owners of these so-called "dangerous" breeds do not care about public safety because they object so strongly to BSL. On the contrary, these owners are acutely aware of the need for strong non-breed-specific dangerous/vicious dog laws, and they fully support efforts to strengthen and enforce those laws. However, these owners also realize that the problem of dog bites and dog attacks does not lie within a single breed or group of breeds. The problem ultimately lies with the individual owner, and that is where the focus of dangerous dog laws should be.

In cities where BSL legislation has been passed, enforcement of a breed-related law is difficult because of inability to accurately identify breeds, unfair negative impact on model citizens and equally model mannerly dogs, and lack of attention to the real issue of dog owner responsibility.

Regarding dog bites, EVERY breed and mixed breeds are associated with this issue. The ADDBA recognizes that dogs bite as a natural instinct in certain situations. Given that the majority of dog bite victims are children, the ADDBA feels it is vital that the public become more informed about dog behavior, responsible pet ownership as well as learn to train/socialize their dogs. In addition, a public education campaign is needed for children to learn proper behavior around their pets.

However, in recognition that dog bites are a public concern, the ADDBA feels that in addition to a public education campaign, enacting a city ordinance that addresses dangerous dogs that demonstrate dangerous behavior, regardless of breed, is a more effective way to reduce the incidence of dog bites and/or dog bite fatalities.

The ADDBA believes the following recommendations would more effectively reduce the number of dog bites and dog bite related incidences:

- Promote public education about responsible pet ownership.

- Promote public education about the importance of proper dog training, socialization and understanding of dog behavior,
- Strongly enforce existing animal control laws such as leash laws that prohibit the free roaming of a person's pet.
- Enforce existing legislation to address animal cruelty and neglect.

Legislation needs to be focused on the negligence of irresponsible owners, and NOT the animal.
Enact legislation based upon behavior and not by breed or the appearance of the dog.

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