

The Government in El Dorado Kansas Should Not Waste Taxpayer Money or Interfere with Property Rights

Over the past few years, state and local governments have been affected by a severe economic recession and have had to tighten their belts, cut important public safety programs and reduce staff. Yet The City of El Dorado is now contemplating enacting a costly new law that bans, restricts and even kills certain pets based solely on their alleged breed.

Breed-discriminatory laws, such as the ones that ban, restrict or kill any alleged pit bull terrier or mixed-breed, short-haired muscular dog (most often those commonly referred to as "pit bulls"), not only interfere with responsible pet owners' property rights, but can quickly become a serious burden on local governments and a waste of tax dollars. Undoubtedly, enforcement of such a law drains needed resources from truly important and vital government services, such as fire protection, parks and road maintenance.

The City of El Dorado's government has a responsibility to make decisions based on facts, not reactively and without considering the cost of its actions. If The City of El Dorado were to enact a breed-discriminatory law, it can expect animal control services to need an additional \$11,942 for enforcement, \$3,533 for kenneling, \$2,361 for DNA testing, \$2,165 for legal services, and \$429 for the cost of killing the pets who are confiscated. These are significant budgetary costs, totaling \$20,430.

Estimated Costs of Breed-Discriminatory Laws in El Dorado Kansas

Location	Enforcement	Kenneling	DNA Testing	Legal Fees	Euthanasia	Total
El Dorado Kansas	\$11,942	\$3,533	\$2,361	\$2,165	\$429	\$20,430

In addition, governments that interfere with citizens' property rights through breed-discriminatory provisions have the burden of proving the heritage of individual pets and providing constitutional due process protections before seizing and housing them. As a result, the costs for enforcement go well beyond the traditional role of animal control services (to target the actual behavior of individual dogs) and into other, more costly areas of local government, frequently involving expensive and lengthy litigation. During the court proceedings, the city is responsible for picking up the tab for housing the dog until the trial and appeal are concluded.

Enforcing a breed-discriminatory law, then, will ultimately deplete the limited resources that The City of El Dorado can allocate for animal control and require that the additional funds be taken from other departments or local programs and services.

Most pet dogs are loved and cared-for members of somebody's family. Responsible owners should be able to have any breed of dog they like without government interference in their property rights. It is arbitrary and unfair to break up families, traumatize children, and spend taxpayer money to ban or restrict dogs based solely on a dog's alleged breed, without regard for behavior or facts. A far more efficient use of public resources would be to enforce existing laws that prosecute and penalize negligent or reckless owners who not only abuse man's best friend, but put their neighbors at risk.

This analysis was produced by John Dunham and Associates for Best Friends Animal Society. It is based on the best available information on dog ownership rates and the costs of animal control programs. For summary results and a detailed methodology [click here...](#)