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The Cost of Breed-Discriminatory Legislation in El Dorado Kansas

We all want safe communities for people and pets. We also want our communities to be protected against any dangerous dog — **and we want abused dogs to be protected against reckless owners.** This goal of public safety should be achieved in the most effective and most thorough way possible. **Breed-discriminatory legislation does not contribute to that goal.** **Not only does it fail to enhance public safety, it interferes with citizens' property rights and is extremely expensive for communities to enforce.**

Failure to enhance public safety. Studies done in countries with breed-discriminatory laws, including the United Kingdom, Spain and Germany, found that these laws didn't reduce the number of dog bites or improve public safety. ¹ **That's why the American Bar Association, the National Animal Control Association, and the American Veterinary Medical Association do not support breed discrimination.** Instead, they support laws that go after the real problem: **the behavior of the individual dog and the behavior of the reckless owner.²**

The best safety-focused laws do the following:

Common sense laws

1. Demand that all dog owners restrain or restrict their dogs (regardless of breed or whether the dogs have a history of biting) when the dogs are off their property.
2. Require that all nuisance or dangerous dogs be microchipped for permanent identification, and that they also be sterilized.
3. Prohibit reckless or problem pet owners from owning dogs for at least a specified period of time.

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Interference with property rights. Breed-discriminatory laws infringe on our property rights. All Americans who follow the **safety rules should be allowed to own whatever breed of dog they choose.** It's that simple.

Expensive to enforce. Breed-discriminatory legislation not only hurts responsible pet owners by placing their pets at risk of being seized and killed, **it forces taxpayers to pay for this arbitrary and ineffective practice.** Additionally, local governments that enact breed-discriminatory provisions will see their already underfunded animal control costs increase significantly. Indeed, misguided breed-discriminatory laws restricting specific types of dogs will cost the citizens of The **City of El Dorado more than \$20,430, while accomplishing little.** Estimated costs include:

- Animal control and enforcement: \$11,942
- Kenneling and veterinary care: \$3,533
- Euthanasia and carcass disposal: \$429
- Cost of additional litigation necessary to prove the heritage of individual dogs and provide constitutional due process protections before seizing family pets: \$2,165
- DNA testing: \$2,361

Actual costs to the community's citizens could be much higher, since these estimates do not include a shelter veterinarian (if one is not on-site), increased staffing for added enforcement tasks (training, identification, seizure, testimony, etc.), or capital costs associated with increased shelter space necessary to hold seized pets during the often lengthy hearing and appeal process.

Millions of dogs at risk. **Pet dogs are an integral part of everyday life for millions of Americans.** There are currently an estimated 73.6 million dogs living in the U.S., and 39 percent of households include at least one dog.³ At least five million of these dogs may be described as pit-bull-terrier-like,⁴ putting them at risk of being seized and possibly killed when breed-discriminatory laws are passed. Here's how many dogs could be at risk in your state:

Estimated number of dogs in The City of El Dorado: **3,502**
Estimated number of pit-bull-terrier-like dogs: **253**

A far more efficient use of local resources would be to enforce existing laws that penalize, prosecute and fine negligent owners who not only abuse man's best friend but also put their neighbors at risk by creating unsafe situations with their dogs.

**** Key point! ****

¹ "World-Wide Failure of Breed Specific Legislation," National Canine Research Council, http://www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com/uploaded_files/Inymce/World-wide%20Failure%20of%20BSL.pdf

² American Bar Association, Resolution 100 (2012), available here http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/mental_physical_disability/Resolution_100_authcheckdam.pdf
National Animal Control Association Guidelines for Addressing Dangerous/Vicious Animals (2002), available here <http://www.nacanat.org/guidelines.html#dangerous>
American Veterinary Medical Association Policy on Dangerous Animal Legislation, <https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/Dangerous-Animal-Legislation.aspx>

³ The estimate of the total number of dogs is based on an analysis conducted by John Dunham and Associates for Best Friends Animal Society in 2012. The percentage of ownership figures is from American Pet Products Association, 2011-2012 APPA National Pet Owners Survey, www.americanpetproducts.org/press_industry/trends.asp. This equates to 78.2 million dogs, which differs slightly from the figure calculated by John Dunham and Associates.

⁴ John Dunham and Associates, Inc., "The Fiscal Impact of Breed Discriminatory Legislation in the U.S." (2012), http://bestfriends.org/files/economics_nutrition/publications%20methodology%20and%20write%20up.pdf

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](#).

