

*Preserving the Human-Canine Bond*

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## Effective v. Ineffective Laws

We are able to enjoy the benefits of living with dogs (the human-canine bond) when we create safe, humane communities that are good for people and good for pets.

**Effective laws** support and promote human-canine bonds by clearly describing the standards of Responsible Pet Ownership practices expected by the community from all dog owners. They also outline the dog owner behaviors that the community will not tolerate.

**Ineffective laws** have the opposite effect. [Click here](#) or scroll to the bottom of this page to learn about the characteristics of ineffective laws.

The goal of animal control ordinances and pet ownership laws should be to raise the standards of pet ownership from problematic to acceptable. Doing so protects the interests of people with pets, people without pets, and the animals.

### RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP LAWS ARE EFFECTIVE

Responsible pet ownership laws are laws that require all dog owners to exercise humane care, custody, and control of their dogs.

Responsible pet ownership laws set acceptable and achievable minimum standards of pet owner behavior, agreed upon by all of the stakeholders within a community.

The community then holds people accountable to those standards.

A model set of acceptable and achievable standards includes:

1. Requiring that owners license their pets and provide permanent ID.
2. Facilitating and requiring the proper care, training, and socialization of pets.
3. Spaying and neutering pets if they are not part of a responsible breeding program.

A responsible pet ownership community would never mandate spay/neuter. It would provide education, make spay/neuter services accessible and affordable to all citizens, and implement reasonable levels of differential licensing for spayed/unspayed and neutered/un-neutered pets.

Do these laws?



*The Humane Society of the United States' (HSUS) Pets for Life programs and toolkit enable communities to improve the well-being of pets and their owners in underserved communities through the delivery of free or low-cost veterinary and S/N services.*

4. Not allowing your pet(s) to become a threat or nuisance in the community.

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NCRC Video Interview with Janis Bradley

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### Publications

- Visual Breed ID Poster: German Shepherd Mixes
- Visual Breed ID Poster: Labrador retriever Mixes
- Visual Breed ID Poster: "Pit Bull" Mixes
- Dog Bites: Problems & Solutions
- The Problem of Dog-Related Incidents and Encounters
- The Pit Bull Placebo

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### View Points

Humane Communities are Safe. Safe Communities are Humane. by Cynthia Bathurst

Click [here](#) to read entire Viewpoint.

### Reading Suggestions



The Relevance of Breed in Selecting a

8. Purchase your pet(s) ethically and from a credible source.

Education to help create better pet owners and enforcement of ordinances will result in safe, humane communities.



Learn about the model that preserves and enhances the human-canine bond: the Responsible Pet Ownership Community of Calgary, Alberta.

About



Companion Dog

Stacy Bradley is author of Dog Bite, Bait and Slobber: The Most Dangerous and Tug-Of-War Problems and Solutions. She explores the relevance of breed in selecting a companion dog in this publication.

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UK - Responsible Pet Ownership; Breed ID; Dog Legislation; Injuries; Dog Bites; Publications; Contact Us; Blogmap

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INEFFECTIVE LAWS DIVERT RESOURCES FROM REAL SOLUTIONS

When communities enact (or retain) ineffective laws, there can be serious and unconsidered consequences for individual community members - and long-term negative impacts on the social and fiscal health of the community.

In this video interview, Jill Bragg, NCRC advisor and Director of Animal & Welfare Services at PetSmart, shares her perspective on ineffective laws.

The long-term consequences of ineffective laws can include:

- being less likely to address problem behavior
- higher reliance on court-ordered remedies for owners
- placing increased financial burdens on owners and taxpayers
- placing a burden on already strained public resources and private businesses who must deal with the effects of increased animal control and police costs
- creating a barrier to entry for breeders and breeders who are not breeders
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Types of ineffective laws include:

- breed-specific or breed-discriminatory laws (BSL or BDS), which prohibit or restrict the keeping of dogs of specified breeds and/or mixed-breed dogs with similar physical characteristics



*leashing - tie an animal up to restrict movement*

NCRC's 2015 FAQ provides an overview of this type of ineffective law:

**Patrol laws, which restrict a maximum number of dogs allowed per residence.**

- Leashing laws or ordinances with restrictions such as time limits, specific equipment requirements, temperature ranges, etc. that overly complicate enforcement.
- Mandatory spay and neuter (SM) laws that require the sterilization of dogs - usually those of a specified breed or mixed-breed dogs with specified or general physical characteristics.

The following characteristics denote an ineffective law:

- **Ineffective laws are costly.**

Ineffective laws waste precious public resources. They are costly to all taxpayers, regardless of whether or not they may own a dog or dogs. Ineffective laws also unfairly burden individual dog owners.

BSL is an example of a type of ineffective law that wastes precious public resources (taxpayer dollars) and demands additional appropriations.

For example, BSL may force some, but not all, dog owners to bear ordinance-imposed financial costs resulting from requirements to maintain higher liability insurance levels or to purchase expensive containment systems. These dog owners may also be forced to confront having their family pet taken from them and destroyed.

Finally, because ineffective laws lower license compliance, communities also lose licensing revenues that could have been used to fund important animal services.



Best Friends Animal Society developed a fiscal impact calculator that allows communities to estimate the cost of attempting to enforce breed-specific legislation.



A recent study shows why the expense related to enforcing ineffective, breed-specific legislation does not produce the desired result of reducing serious dog bite-related injuries.

- **Ineffective laws are difficult to enforce.**

Ineffective laws are *onerous*: they demand extraordinary or impossible time and cost to enforce.

Limit laws are an example of a type of ineffective law that is difficult to enforce, as are breed-specific laws, complicated tethering ordinances, and mandatory spay/neuter laws. Enabling the enforcement of these ineffective laws would be costly and impractical, as well as time-consuming for public servants.

Without enforcing door-to-door tethering for visitors (and in the case of a breed, time-limited tethering ordinances, returning for a second dog after the expiration of a time limit), animal control officers generally cannot know when an owner is in violation of an ineffective law.

Breed-specific legislation, which regulates or prohibits the keeping of many distinct breeds of dogs and also dogs with similar physical characteristics, is especially difficult to enforce and open to legal challenge. Recent research has revealed the inaccuracy of visual breed identification of dogs of unknown origin (mixed-breed dogs) - even by experts.

[Click to learn more about Visual Breed Identification for a poster and infographic.](#)

Ineffective laws are over and under-inclusive.

**Ineffective laws are over and under-inclusive.** *Ineffective laws are over and under-inclusive.*

Limit laws are a type of law that is both over and under-inclusive.

Consider, for example, a community that wants to control nuisance and other dog-related issues. The community's governing body decides the solution is to limit owners to a maximum of three dogs. A limit law would penalize a responsible pet owner with five dogs who is not a nuisance or threat to neighbors. Upon enforcement of a limit law, the owner with five dogs may face a loss of use or more of his companions. What is more, a limit law would not address the irresponsible owners who, however many dogs they have, leave them out at night barking, allow them to damage neighbors' property, or worse - allow them to threaten other animals or people.

Communities should insist on the humane care, custody, and control of all dogs at all times by all owners. Limit laws, like other types of ineffective laws, are not an adequate alternative to responsible pet ownership laws.

Ineffective laws discourage compliance and responsible pet ownership practices.

Otherwise responsible dog-owning community members may circumvent laws entirely when they require compliance with expensive special requirements or, worse, when they require the relinquishment and destruction of a beloved and responsibly-cared-for pet.

**Responsible pet owners may have their pets taken from them and destroyed because they do not have a limit law or breed law. Responsible pet owners may have their pets taken from them and destroyed because they do not have a limit law or breed law. Responsible pet owners may have their pets taken from them and destroyed because they do not have a limit law or breed law.**

Failure to provide veterinary care poses an increased threat to public health, as unvaccinated animals can spread disease. This also leads to a loss of revenue from licensing.

Ineffective laws exact a steep price in tax dollars, fairness, and community harmony. With effective, responsible pet ownership laws, everyone profits.

**Read and Learn.**

Expand your understanding with these additional resources:

- [Dog Breed Specific Legislation by Jane R. Benley, AVMA/CDC Statements on Breed-Specific Legislation](#)
- [Obama Administration Opposes Breed-Specific Legislation \(BSL\)](#)
- [American Bar Association \(ABA\) Opposes Breed of All Breed-Specific Laws](#)
- [New Study Explains Why BSL Does Not Reduce Dog Bites](#)
- [NCRC Commentary on Paytonok, D., Suter, M., Marder, A., "Use of a number-based-to-ban legislation to decrease instances of breed-specific legislation in decreasing the risk of dog bite-related injury." JAVMA, vol 327, Number 7, October 1, 2015.](#)
- [Banned Breeds Are No More Aggressive Than Others, New Study Finds](#)

*- need to be registered + if not they get fined & then if they go to vet & care not following guidelines they need to report that.*