

## **POSITION STATEMENTS AGAINST BSL**

**National Animal Control Association (NACA)**

**American Dog Owners Association (ADOA)**

**American Kennel Club (AKC)**

**American Veterinarian Association (AMVA)**

**Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT)**

**Colorado Veterinarian Medicine Association (CVMA)**

**California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA)**

**International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC)**

**Iowa Veterinary Medical Association (IVMA)**

**Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association**

**Longmont Colorado Veterinary Statement**

**Maryland Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA)**

**National Association of Dog Obedience Institute, INC (NADOI)**

**National Animal Interest Association (NAIA)**

**New York State Veterinary Medical Association (NYSVMS)**

**Pit Bull Recovery Central (PBRC)**

**Washington State Veterinary Medical Association (WSVMA)**

**Endangered Breeds Association (EBA)**

## **National Animal Control Association Policy Statement**

### **Extended Animal Control Concerns - Dangerous/Vicious Animals**

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Dangerous and/or vicious animals should be labeled as such as a result of their actions or behavior and not because of their breed.

#### **BASIS FOR POLICY**

Any animal may exhibit aggressive behavior regard-less of breed. Accurately identifying a specific animal's lineage for prosecution purposes may be extremely difficult. Additionally, breed specific legislation may create an undue burden to owners who otherwise have demonstrated proper pet management and responsibility.

#### **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Agencies should encourage enactment and stringent enforcement of dangerous/vicious dog laws. When applicable, agencies should not hesitate to prosecute owners for murder, manslaughter, or similar violations resulting from their animal's actions, and their owner lack of responsibility. Laws should clearly define "dangerous" or "vicious", and provide for established penalties. Penalties may include fines, imprisonment, and/or the relinquishing of total privileges to pet ownership. If a dangerous/vicious animal is allowed to be kept, laws should specify methods of secure confinement and control. A dangerous/vicious animal when kept outside should be confined in an escape-proof enclosure which is locked and secured on all six sides. Signs should be posted at property entrances and be visible from the nearest sidewalk or street. The licensing record could include a notation which will immediately identify an animal which has been deemed dangerous or vicious.

Reviewed/Revised by the NACA Corporate Office - 09/17/02



NATIONAL ANIMAL CONTROL ASSOCIATION

Johnnie W. Mays  
Executive Director  
P.O. Box 480851  
Kansas City, MO 64148

November 15, 1994

The National Animal Control Association has developed the following policy in regards to dangerous/vicious animals:

"Dangerous and/or vicious animals should be labeled as such as a result of their actions or behavior and not because of their breed."

"Any animal may exhibit aggressive behavior regardless of breed. Accurately identifying a specific animal's lineage for prosecution purposes may be extremely difficult. Additionally, breed specific legislation may create an undue burden to owners who otherwise have demonstrated proper pet management and responsibility."

NACA's policy recommendations for dangerous/vicious animals are available upon request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Johnnie W. Mays', written in dark ink.

Johnnie W. Mays  
Executive Director  
National Animal Control Association

RCPL06 (5/95)

*A non-profit corporation representing the interests of animal control*



American Dog Owner's  
Association, Inc.

To Promote, Protect and Defend Responsible Dog Ownership



### **Breed Specific Policy**

The American Dog Owners Association opposes legislation that discriminates against specific breeds or phenotype classes of dogs, or creates restrictions that in fact make a law breed specific.



## Dangerous Dog” Control Legislation

The American Kennel Club supports reasonable, enforceable, non-discriminatory laws to govern the ownership of dogs. The AKC believes that dog owners should be responsible for their dogs. We support laws that: establish a fair process by which specific dogs are identified as "dangerous" based on stated, measurable actions; impose appropriate penalties on irresponsible owners; and establish a well-defined method for dealing with dogs proven to be dangerous. We believe that, if necessary, dogs proven to be "dangerous" may need to be humanely destroyed. The American Kennel Club strongly opposes any legislation that determines a dog to be "dangerous" based on specific breeds or phenotypic classes of dogs.



**THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB**  
CANINE LEGISLATION DEPARTMENT

**Position Statement**

**“DANGEROUS DOG” CONTROL LEGISLATION**

The American Kennel Club supports reasonable, enforceable, non-discriminatory laws to govern the ownership of dogs. The AKC believes that dog owners should be responsible for their dogs. We support laws that: establish a fair process by which specific dogs are identified as “dangerous” based on stated, measurable actions; impose appropriate penalties on irresponsible owners; and establish a well-defined method for dealing with dogs proven to be dangerous. We believe that, if necessary, dogs proven to be “dangerous” may need to be humanely destroyed. The American Kennel Club strongly opposes any legislation that determines a dog to be “dangerous” based on specific breeds or phenotypic classes of dogs.



## **AVMA Position on Dangerous Animal Legislation**

(Approved by the AVMA Executive Board, 1988)

The AVMA supports dangerous animal legislation by state, county, or municipal governments provided that legislation does not refer to specific breeds or classes of animals. This legislation should be directed at fostering safety and protection of the general public from animals classified as dangerous.



**AMERICAN VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**  
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**DANGEROUS ANIMAL LEGISLATION**  
(Approved by the AVMA Executive Board, 1988)

The AVMA supports dangerous animal legislation by state, county, or municipal governments provided that legislation does not refer to specific breeds or classes of animals. This legislation should be directed at fostering safety and protection of the general public from animals classified as dangerous and undesirable.



## ***Breed Specific Legislation***

*The following statements reflect the opinion of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers.*

*The Association of Pet dog Trainers (APDT) supports the adoption or enforcement of a program for the control of potentially dangerous or vicious dogs that is fair, non-discriminatory and addresses dogs that are shown to be dangerous by their actions.*

*The APDT opposes any law that deems a dog as dangerous or vicious based on appearance, breed or phenotype. Canine temperaments are widely varied, and behavior cannot be predicted by physical features such as head shape, coat length, muscle to bone ratio, etc. The only predictor of behavior is behavior.*

*As an organization comprised of dog trainers, behaviorists and other animal professionals, the APDT is fully aware that any dog can bite, any dog can maim, and any dog can kill. A dangerous or vicious dog is a product of a combination of individual genetics, upbringing, socialization, and lack of proper training. The solution to preventing dog bites is education of owners, breeders, and the general public about aggression prevention, not legislation directed at certain breeds.*

*Singling out and publicly demonizing certain breeds as dangerous is unfair, discriminatory, and does an immense disservice to those breeds and the people who care about them. Even more chilling, breed specific legislation encourages the faulty public perception of other breeds as being inherently safe. This can lead misguided individuals to engage in unsafe conduct with other breeds that can result in injury or death by individual representatives of those breeds mistakenly perceived as safe. Also, designating certain breeds as inherently dangerous implies to the public that behavior is not effectively influenced, positively or negatively, by training. This misconception will likely produce a growing number of dangerous dogs as misinformed, complacent dog owners fail to practice responsible aggression-prevention measures.*



COLORADO VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

OFFICIAL POSITION STATEMENT  
Colorado Veterinary Medical Association  
adopted June, 1988

The Colorado Veterinary Medical Association strongly supports and encourages responsible pet ownership and the enforcement of existing animal control ordinances. We believe that this would prevent most, if not all, of the dog attacks that have been reported recently, as many of them were the result of owner negligence or actual encouragement of aggressive behavior. In these instances, severe penalties should be imposed to assure these owners are held fully accountable. We encourage governmental authorities to provide adequate funding of animal control agencies to support their efforts to guarantee the public's safety and well-being.

As veterinary medical professionals, we believe that no one particular breed of dog should be discriminated against because, given a responsible owner, the vast majority of dogs are a benefit to mankind. In the present furor over "pit bulls" there is no formal definition of the term and, therefore, it is unclear which breed or breeds are being included in a blanket condemnation which we wholeheartedly oppose.

RCPL05

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In Colorado 1-800-228-5429



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## Breed-Specific Legislation Introduced

Senator Jackie Speier (D-Hillsborough) introduced legislation on June 21 that would allow individual cities and counties to enact rules regarding specific dog breeds. The CVMA is opposing the legislation and created a [fact sheet](#) on the issue.

While we are concerned by the recent dog mauling incidents involving children and pit bulls, breed-specific legislation is not the solution. Determining which dog breeds are "vicious" will be extremely difficult, and dog owners may actually be less likely to license their dogs and get necessary vaccinations if they believe they will be identified as owners of so-called "vicious breeds."

Current state law prohibits cities and counties from passing any laws that target a breed of dog. [SB 861](#), which was formerly a Medi-Cal bill, would not ban specific dog breeds.

Instead, the bill states that local governments would no longer be prohibited "from adopting a program regulating dangerous and vicious dogs that is specific as to breed pertaining to mandatory spay or neuter programs and breeding requirements." This amended bill also includes a provision that requires all jurisdictions that do implement such programs to provide quarterly statistical dog bite reports to the state veterinarian.

A hearing on SB 861 was held in the Assembly Local Government Committee on June 29. The bill passed out of the committee on a vote of 4-3.

(A205)

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## [International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants](#)

### **Position Statement on Breed-Specific Legislation:**

The International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC) is an organization representing professional animal trainers and animal behavior specialists. The IAABC strongly opposes any legislation specifically designed to target or discriminate against dogs based solely on their breed or appearance. The IAABC does not believe that a dog poses a danger to society solely because of its breed. Dogs can become dangerous as a result of faulty socialization, inappropriate training, poor living conditions and other factors having nothing to do with their breed. The IAABC believes that the objectives behind breed specific legislation can be met more effectively through rigorous enforcement and, where necessary, the strengthening of existing laws. We fully understand and support the need for laws to protect society, human and animal alike; however, our organization feels that any new legislation should be based on specific behaviors or actions and should not discriminate based on breed alone.

## **DANGEROUS DOG ORDINANCES**

The Iowa Veterinary Medical Association opposes breed specific dangerous dog legislation.

A national dangerous dog bite registry that would require all dogs with dog bite history be micro chipped and registered may be a solution. There would need to be rules/regulations established to prevent repeat offenders and eliminate the opportunity for dangerous dogs to move from one location to another.

The Iowa Veterinary Medical Association supports legislation to make it a serious misdemeanor to allow a dangerous dog to run at large.

The Iowa Veterinary Medical Association opposes legislation that would allow euthanizing a dangerous dog by anyone other than a law officer, humane organization, veterinarian or person authorized under Iowa Code Sections 351.26 and 351.27.

The Iowa Veterinary Medical Association supports removing and euthanizing a dangerous dog that has injured or killed any person or domestic animal more than once.

A dangerous dog is any dog that has, without provocation, injured or killed any person or domestic animal.

### **IOWA CODE**

#### **Section 351.26 Right and duty to kill untagged dog.**

It shall be lawful for any person, and the duty of all peace officers within their respective jurisdictions unless such jurisdiction shall have otherwise provided for the seizure and impoundment of dogs, to kill any dog for which a rabies vaccination tag is required, when the dog is not wearing a collar with rabies vaccination tag attached.

#### **Section 351.27 Right to kill tagged dog.**

It shall be lawful for any person to kill a dog, wearing a collar with a rabies vaccination tag attached, when the dog is caught in the act of worrying, chasing, maiming, or killing any domestic animal or fowl, or when such dog is attacking or attempting to bite a person.

#### **Section 351.33 Rabies vaccination.**

Every owner of a dog shall obtain a rabies vaccination for such animal. It shall be unlawful for any person to own or have a dog in their person's possession, six months of age or over, which has not been vaccinated against rabies. Dogs kept in kennels and not allowed to run at large shall not be subject to these vaccination requirements.

#### **Section 351.37 Dogs running at large – impoundment – disposition.**

A dog shall be apprehended and impounded by a local board of health or law enforcement official if the dog is running at large and the dog is not wearing a

**Nelson Road Veterinary Clinic, Inc.**  
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11/25/05

City of Longmont  
City Council Members  
City Complex  
3rd and Kimbark  
Longmont, Colorado 80503

In the last week I have noticed you are considering discussing a pit bull dog ban. If you go into the American Veterinary Medical Association's web site, or the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association's web site, you will find opinions on such a breed ban. Enclosed is some information, in order to reduced you valuable time. I have \*\* the areas of importance to save you time. I know of no educated, professional organization that supports such a breed ban.

It is a well-known fact that you cannot take a DNA test of a dog and determine its breed. There are many dog breeds, such as a Stafforshire, which look like pit bulls. It is expensive to be the entity that will legally enforce a ban when one cannot determine the dog breed.

A breed ban is not the answer. There are many breeds that can be aggressive: enclosed are some of our client education handouts. If you go to the Center for Disease Control web site, you will find some of the dogs that bite the most are not listed (i.e. Cockers). Responsible pet ownership is the attempt one should take, in my opinion. As one involved with politics, you will understandably want to consider pleasing both sides. As you will note in our client education handouts, some insurance companies do not insure some breeds. Even though these commercially available client education handout are directed towards educating and attempting to redirect/alter the behavior of a dog, many of these aggressive owning dogs do not see full service veterinary clinics. Although the cost of such information is less than \$0.25 to provide, the vaccination clinics (on county property) do not have the approach or time for aggression behavior discussions, when the puppy is small. Even then, many dogs genetically have aggressive behaviors, such as terriers. For a few decades I have worked with Boulder County Sheriff/animal control, and the clients who cause the problems do not visit full service clinics.



**MARYLAND VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**  
**Association Headquarters**

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**Official Position on Dangerous Animal Legislation**

The Maryland Veterinary Medical Association encourages and supports ordinances that promote responsible pet ownership and at the same time protect the public from dangerous and vicious animals. We oppose legislation that restricts or prohibits certain breeds of dogs, since we do not believe that is a workable solution.

Frederick F. Everhart, DVM, JD  
Immediate Past President

National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors, Inc.



### **Regarding breed-specific legislation**

**The National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors, Inc. (NADOI)** strongly opposes breed specific legislation which targets or discriminates against certain dogs based only on their breed or appearance. Such laws are unfair because they assume that a dog may be dangerous simply because of breed. In fact, it is almost always the behavior of the owners of these dogs which makes them a danger to others.

Since 1965, NADOI has worked to help people train their dogs to be well behaved. Also, NADOI educates dog owners about their responsibility not only to their dogs but to their communities. Ordinances against dangerous dogs, unattended and loose dogs, nuisance barking, and other objectionable dog behaviors should be enacted and aggressively enforced. These laws, unlike breed specific laws, force all dog owners to be responsible for the behavior of their dogs.

Approved by the Board of Directors, June 2004.



## **NATIONAL ANIMAL INTEREST ALLIANCE**

*Our members feed, clothe, heal, comfort, entertain, inform and protect the world!*

### **Breed specific legislation**

NAIA supports reasonable laws to protect the public from dangerous dogs and opposes breed-specific legislation in any form. Breed-specific laws target good dogs and responsible animal owners along with the bad.

Unfortunately, sensational media coverage and misleading claims of canine super strength and cunning of some breeds of dogs, especially the bull-and-terrier breeds and crossbreeds, have manipulated public opinion. These factors often lead to limits on breeding and owning certain types of dogs despite the fact that many individual dogs fitting the description are beloved family pets or valuable working partners. Restrictions from outright bans to requirements for confinement, insurance, and spay and neuter often follow incidents in which a breed and its crosses are implicated in aggressive incidents or dog fighting or other criminal activity. Such limits cause the death of many well-behaved pets and rob law-abiding pet owners of their rights to choose a breed or mix and responsibly own or maintain a pet or working dog without government interference.

NAIA supports nuisance ordinances and dangerous dog laws to protect the community against unruly or dangerous dogs and irresponsible dog owners. NAIA supports sentences for violation of dog confinement and nuisance laws that include mandatory attendance at a basic obedience training class. [AKC dog obedience clubs](#) have provided such classes for the general public for decades and, together with private trainers, they represent a well-established community resource for courts dealing with dog-related offenses.



**New York State  
Veterinary Medical Society**

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**Official Position Statement**

Adopted May 1, 1995

The New York State Veterinary Medical Society strongly supports and encourages responsible pet ownership and the enforcement of existing animal control ordinances. We believe that this would prevent most, if not all, of the dog attacks that have been reported recently, as many of them were the result of owner negligence or actual encouragement of aggressive behavior. In these instances, penalties should be imposed to assure these owners are held fully accountable. We encourage governmental authorities to provide adequate funding of animal control agencies to support their efforts to guarantee the public's safety and well-being.

As veterinary medical professionals, we believe that no one particular breed of dog should be discriminated against because, given a responsible owner, the vast majority of dogs are a benefit to mankind. In the present furor over "pit bulls," there is no formal definition of the term and, therefore, it is unclear which breed or breeds are being included in a blanket condemnation which we wholeheartedly oppose.



## Pit Bull Rescue Central

Where Education Meets Rescue

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Pit Bull Rescue Central (PBRC) fully supports reasonable, non-breed specific, dangerous dog laws; laws that will protect responsible owner's rights and promote a safe community for all residents.

PBRC does not support any form of breed specific legislation (BSL), which targets specific breed(s) for restrictions or bans. We know that BSL is ineffective, costly to residents and unfair to responsible dog owners. Below are some facts regarding BSL and Pit Bulls.

- **Organizations against Breed Specific Legislation:**
  - American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)
  - The American Kennel Club (AKC)
  - The United Kennel Club (UKC)
  - American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)
  - Dog Legislation Council of Canada (DLCC)
  - American Temperament Testing Society (ATTS)
  - National Animal Control Association (NACA)
  - Maryland Veterinary Medicine Association
  - Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)
  - American Canine Foundation (ACF)



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
Sandra J. Bertram

## **WASHINGTON STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

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### **WSVMA POSITION STATEMENT DANGEROUS DOG LEGISLATION**

as adopted by the WSVMA Executive Board on June 22, 1990.

During the last decade many counties and municipalities have enacted dog control ordinances with sections pertaining to vicious or dangerous dogs. Although dog bites and attacks have always been a problem, news-media coverage and changes in our society have combined to make the issue politically important. Some jurisdictions have passed breed-specific ordinances which single out individual breeds. Most frequently, pit bull and pit bull crosses are the target breeds; but many breeds have been singled out.

There are many problems associated with ordinances that are breed specific. They can be very arbitrary; an entire breed can be banned because of the actions of a single dog. They are hard to enforce because many breeds are difficult to distinguish, especially when crossed with other breeds. Because a dog is classified as dangerous because of its breed, vicious dogs of other breeds are often allowed relative immunity. Breed specific ordinances fail to address the most important issue—owner responsibility.

It is the position of the WSVMA to support strong animal control legislation. This legislation should address the main issue—the responsibility of the dog owner to be sure that his/her dog is not a hazard to the public. A dog should be defined as dangerous by its actions and not by its parentage. This definition should be applied state-wide with pre-emption of local definitions in order to preserve continuity. Owners should be held criminally as well as civilly liable for the actions of their dogs. Local jurisdictions should have the full support of the legislature and courts in the enforcement of this legislation.

RCPL04

Endangered Breeds Association is dedicated to the responsible ownership of all breeds of dogs. We do not tolerate, nor endorse, anyone who knowingly keeps dangerous dogs of any breed.

We strongly urge you to adopt non-breed-specific legislation which will thoroughly protect your citizens.

Banning specific breeds to control dog bite injuries ignores the scope of the problem and will not protect a community's citizens. Breed bans assume all dogs of a specific breed are likely to bite, instead of acknowledging that most dogs are not a problem. These laws rarely address or assign appropriate responsibilities to owners.

According to American Veterinary Medical Association, statistics on injuries caused by dogs are often used to demonstrate the "dangerousness" of particular breeds. Such arguments are seriously flawed as it is not possible to calculate a bite rate for a breed or to compare rates between breeds because:

- 1 - the breed of a biting dog is often not known or is inaccurately reported;
- 2 - the actual number of bites that occur in a community is not known, especially if they did not result in serious injury;
- 3 - the number of dogs of a particular breed or combination of breeds in a community is not known because it is rare for all dogs in a community to be licensed;
- 4 - statistics often do not consider multiple incidents caused by a single animal;
- 5 - breed popularity changes over time, making comparison of breed-specific bite rates unreliable.

Breed data likely vary between communities, states, or regions, and can even vary between neighborhoods within communities.

Breed-specific ordinances also raise constitutional questions concerning dog owners' 14th amendment rights. Because all types of dogs may inflict injury, ordinances addressing particular breeds can be under inclusive and to violate equal protection. Because identification of a dog's breed with certainty is prohibitively difficult, such ordinances may also be considered vague and to violate due process.

AVMA reports a dog's tendency to bite depends on at least six interacting factors: heredity, early experience, socialization and training, physical and behavioral health, victim behavior, and environment. Banning specific breeds may give owners of other breeds a false sense of security and decrease their desire to seek appropriate socialization and training for their pets.

Endangered Breeds Association recommends:

- 1 - enforcement of generic, non-breed-specific dangerous dog laws with emphasis on irresponsible owners;
- 2 - enforcement of animal control ordinances such as leash laws;
- 3 - school-based and adult education programs that teach pet selection strategies, pet care, responsibility and bite prevention.

Jean Carpenter  
President  
Endangered Breeds Association

# *Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association*

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## **KVMA Policy on Dangerous Animal Legislation**

The KVMA supports dangerous animal legislation by state, county, or municipal governments provided that legislation does not refer to specific breeds or classes of animals. This legislation should be directed at fostering safety and protection of the general public from animals classified as dangerous.

The AVMA and KVMA recommend the following strategies to prevent dog bite injuries:

- 1) enforcement of generic, non-breed-specific dangerous dog laws, with an emphasis on chronically irresponsible owners;
- 2) enforcement of animal control ordinances such as leash laws;
- 3) prohibition of dog fighting;
- 4) encouraging neutering; and
- 5) school-based and adult education programs that teach pet selection strategies, pet care and responsibility, and bite prevention.

**Mid-America Veterinary Conference – Oct. 6 – Oct. 8, 2006**  
Hyatt Regency/Kentucky International Convention Center – Louisville, KY