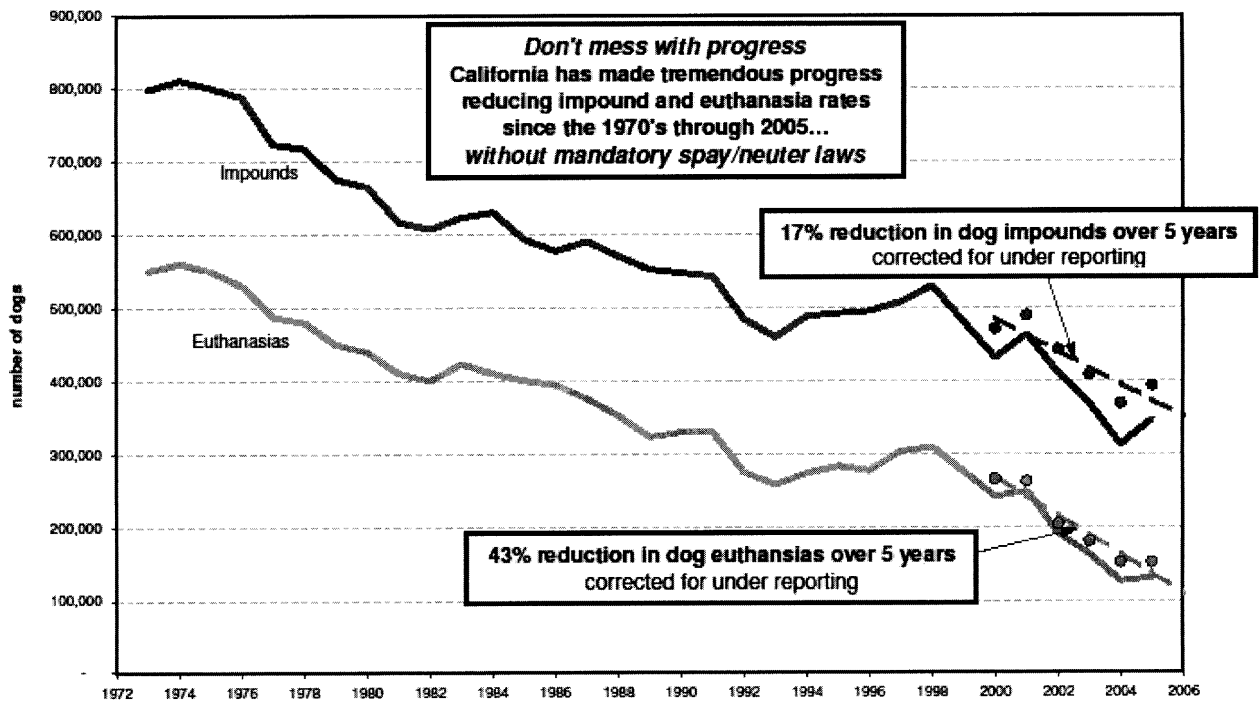


These animal welfare organizations changed their positions because they, like we, have studied the shelter data from jurisdictions that have mandatory spay/neuter and found it to be a failure. Consistently, the facts show that mandatory spay/neuter leads to MORE deaths of cats and dogs, and HIGHER costs to the taxpayers.

Supporters cite Santa Cruz County as their “model for the state” for mandatory spay/neuter because impound and euthanasia stats decreased there since mandatory spay/neuter passed in 1995. But these statistics have been falling all over the state even without mandatory spay/neuter, for a very long time.

California Shelter Impounds and Euthanasias for Dogs, 1973-2005
California Department of Health Services - Veterinary Public Health Section



Notes:
 1) Raw data, not corrected for growth in human population
 2) 1999 omitted due to severe under reporting
 3) Source: California Department of Health Services - Veterinary Public Health Section, with assistance from NAA and The Animal Council

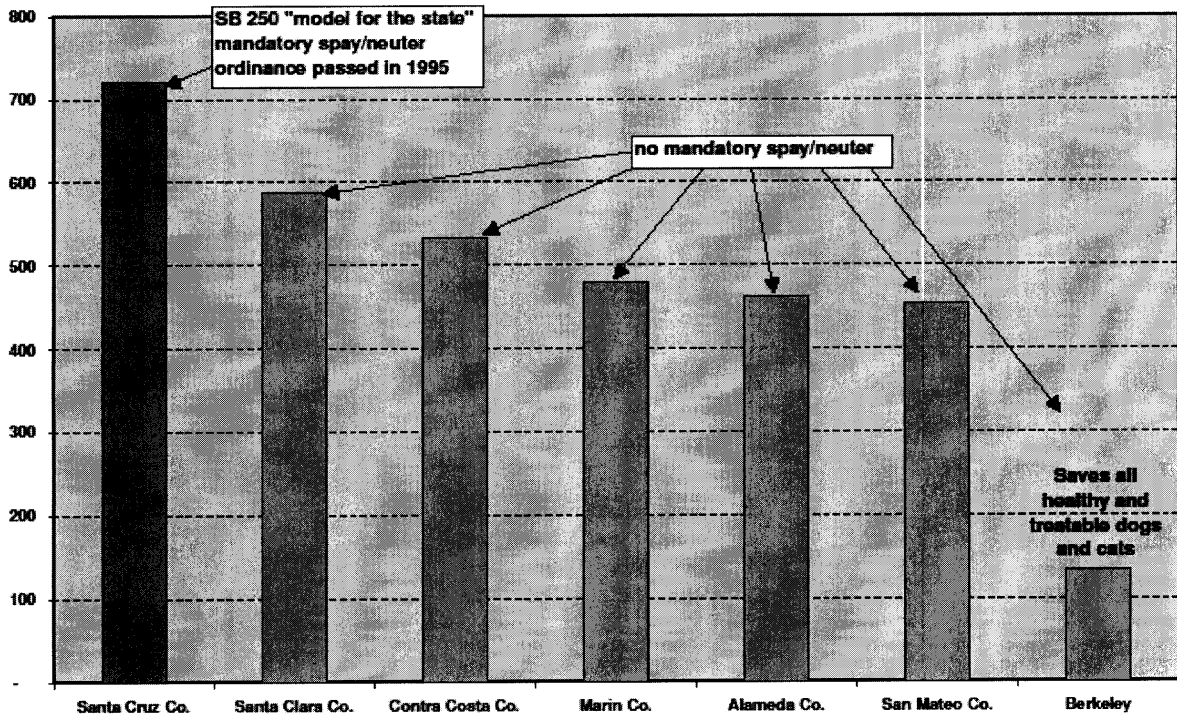
Many California jurisdictions have been experiencing much faster rates of improvement of their shelter statistics than has Santa Cruz County.

Mandatory Spay/Neuter Failure in Santa Cruz County

The ASPCA says because of this sea change we need to compare mandatory spay/neuter jurisdictions to neighboring or similar jurisdictions that do not have mandatory spay/neuter.

More than 10 years after a passing mandatory spay/neuter ordinance, Santa Cruz County kills more dogs and cats per capita than nearby jurisdictions that do not have mandatory spay/neuter.

Mandatory Spay/Neuter Kills
California Jurisdictions -- Dog + Cat Shelter Euthanasia Rates per 100,000 population

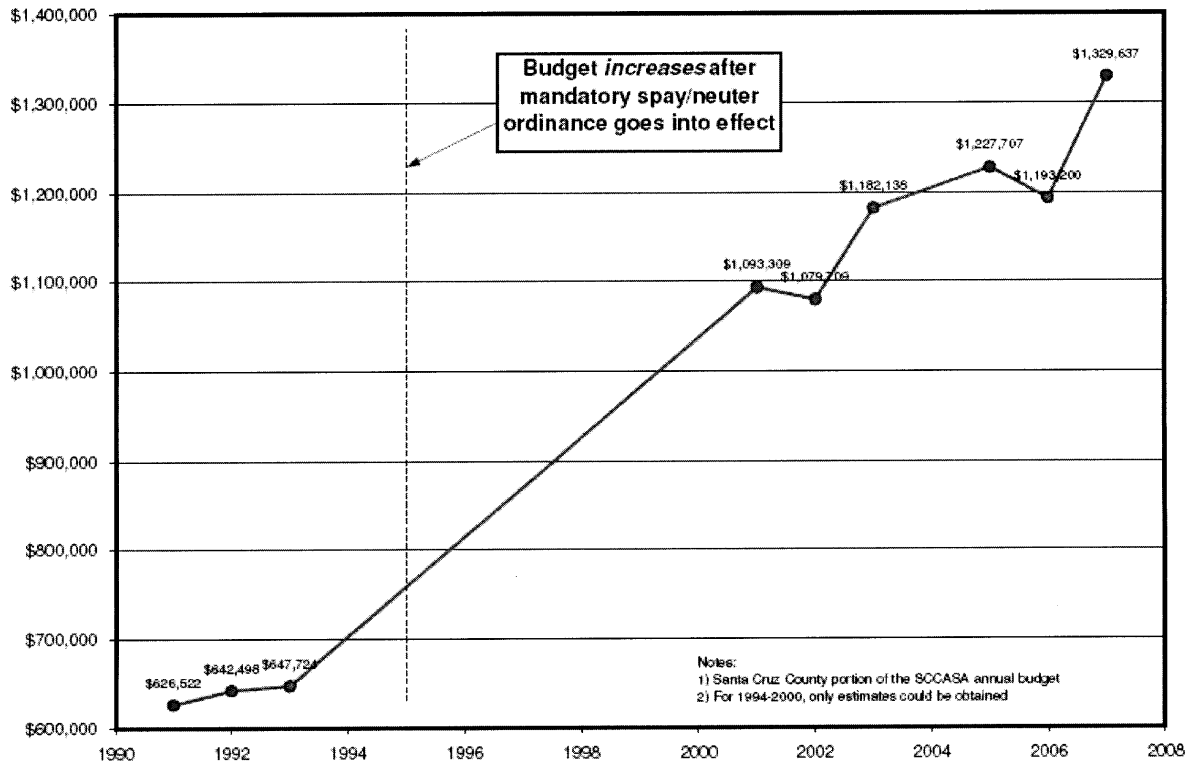


Sources: 2007 California Department of Public Health shelter statistics, U.S. Census Bureau projections for current population of California cities and counties

Mandatory Spay/Neuter Increases Animal Control Costs

Since Santa Cruz County passed mandatory spay/neuter in 1995, animal services costs have doubled.

Santa Cruz County Animal Services Budget

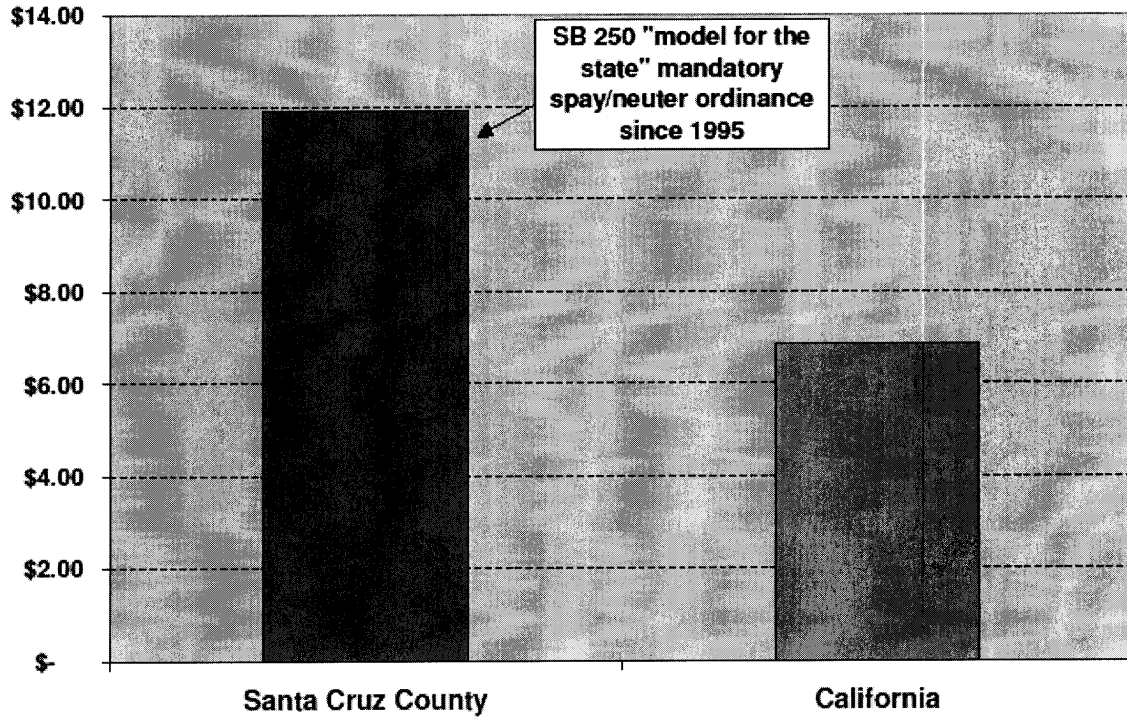


Source: County of Santa Cruz budgets per State Controller County Budget Act, provided by Teresa Johnson; Courtesy of the National Animal Interest Alliance

On a per capita basis, Santa Cruz County's Animal Services budget is now **74% higher** than the California statewide average.

Mandatory spay/neuter kills more pets AND costs the taxpayers more money.

Mandatory Spay/Neuter is Expensive Annual Animal Control Costs, per capita



Sources: Senate Local Government Committee SB 250 bill analysis (\$249 million annual cost of animal services in CA), Santa Cruz Sentinel (\$3 million annual budget for Santa Cruz Co. Animal Services), U.S. Census Bureau current population projections

Mandatory Spay/Neuter Failure in Los Angeles

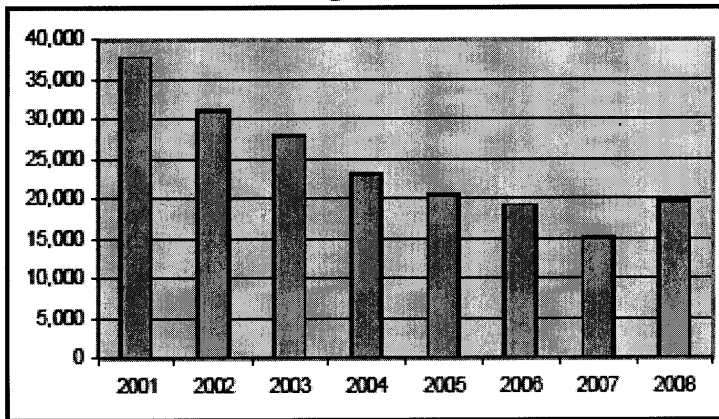
At the urging of the proponents of MSN the City of Los Angeles imposed mandatory spay/neuter in early 2008. In 2008, shelter euthanasias in Los Angeles shot up 24% for dogs and 35% for cats, reversing many years of steady progress.

Los Angeles Animal Services - 2008 Statistical Report

Cat and Dog Euthanasia

The 2008 euthanasia rate for dogs and cats rose 30% compared to 2007. When normalized to account for the 20.5% increase in intakes the euthanasia rate rose 3.02%. Years 2006 through 2008 are the three lowest euthanasia rates in the Department's history. The worst year was 1971 when 110,835 animals were euthanized.

Table 7: Annual Cat and Dog Euthanasia Rate

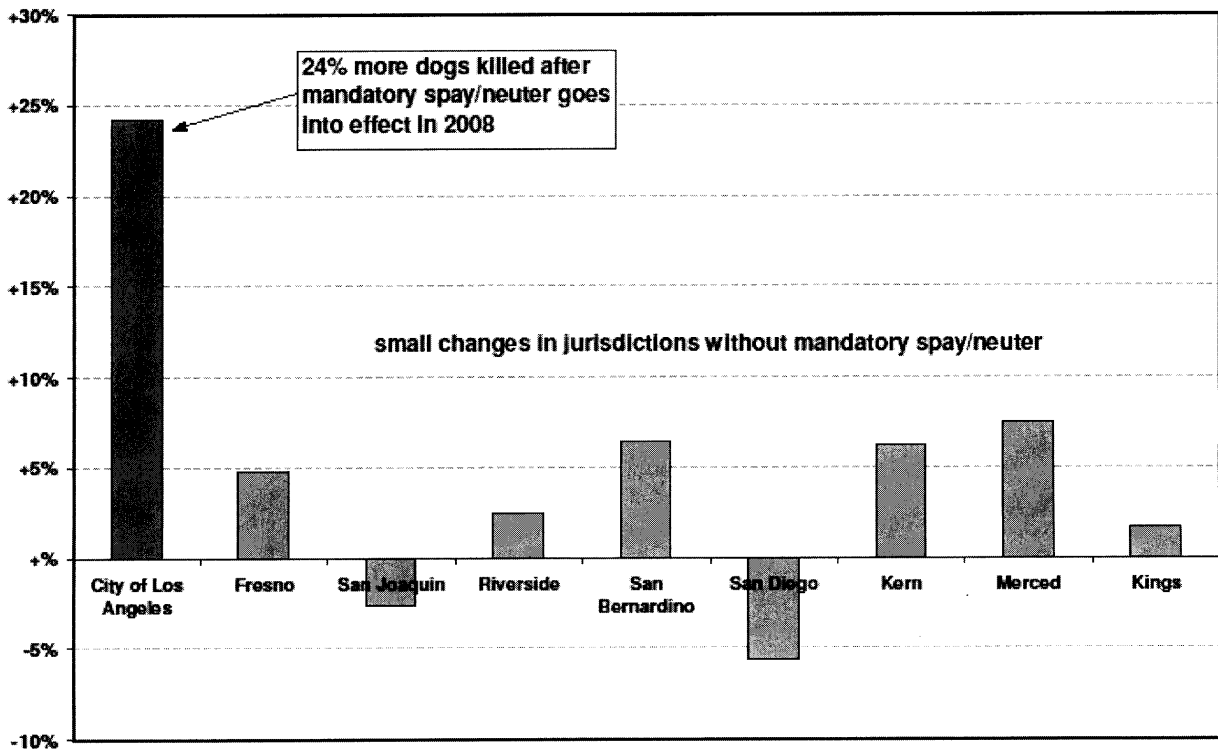


Dog & Cat Euthanasia	
2001	37,818
2002	31,151
2003	27,955
2004	23,111
2005	20,561
2006	19,226
2007	15,009
2008	19,617

<http://www.laanimalservices.com/PDF/reports/annual/2008%20Statistical%20Report%20LA%20Animal%20Services.pdf>

Los Angeles Animal Services blames the bad economy for the increase in shelter euthanasias, but other California counties with similar or higher unemployment rates did not experience such a large increase in 2008.

Change in Dog Euthanasias, 2007 to 2008 California Public Animal Shelters



Sources: California Department of Public Health, Los Angeles Animal Services

Opponents of the Los Angeles mandatory spay/neuter ordinance predicted this result.

Why Mandatory Spay/Neuter Kills More Pets

Everyone on both sides of this debate acknowledges that voluntary spay/neuter has been a key reason why shelter euthanasias have fallen nationwide over the past 30 years. It seems intuitive that if voluntary spay/neuter has helped, that mandatory spay/neuter will also help. But it doesn't work out that way.

Mandatory spay/neuter laws have the unintended consequence of causing more shelter impounds and killing because they fall hardest on the poor. Surveys show that nearly 90% of owned pets are spayed or neutered, but that this falls to about 50% among the poor. When asked, the main reason the poor give for not spaying and neutering their pets is the high cost of the surgery, generally \$200 to \$500 depending on the gender and size of the animal.

Free or low cost, and accessible, voluntary spay/neuter programs have been successful in helping low-income pet owners and further reducing shelter impound and euthanasia rates.

Compelling low-income pet owners to spay or neuter their pets through a mandatory spay/neuter law does not make them any more capable of paying for the surgery.

When a low-income person has their pet impounded for whatever reason, the more expensive it is to recover their pet from impound the less likely they will be able to afford it. Mandatory spay/neuter imposes an additional reason to impound a pet, and it imposes an additional financial burden to recover a pet from impound – the cost of the surgery. As a result, more pets are impounded, and more impounded pets end up being relinquished to shelters rather than reclaimed. Since over 80% of relinquished pets end up being killed, this becomes a conveyor belt to death.

Mandatory spay/neuter laws backfire, and become unintended vehicles to take pets from low-income families -- and kill them.

With the economic recession, many more people are finding themselves in a financial situation where they cannot afford the cost to spay or neuter their pets. They are struggling to put food on the table and pay the mortgage.

Progressive democrats generally do not support policies that fall hardest on the poor, but that's exactly what mandatory spay/neuter does. San Francisco pet columnist Christie Keith discusses this in her column "*There's nothing progressive about mandatory spay/neuter*"



Your Whole Pet - Christie Keith

Archive | E-mail

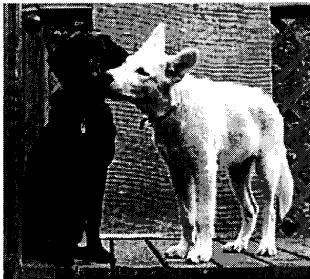
There's nothing progressive about mandatory spay/neuter So why do Democrats keep voting for it?

By Christie Keith, Special to SF Gate
Tuesday, June 9, 2009

PRINT E-MAIL SHARE COMMENTS FONT SIZE

When did the party of "Yes, we can!" become the party of "No, you'd better not" when it comes to dogs and cats?

IMAGES



Courtesy of Christie Keith

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GREAT CHILDREN'S BOOKS ABOUT ANIMALS

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- Classic children's books about animals 12.16.08
- Not-quite classic children's books about animals 12.16.08

As a lifelong liberal I can't fathom why Democratic lawmakers hold the positions they do with regards to animal legislation. Take SB 250, a statewide mandatory spay/neuter bill passed by the California State Senate last week. Only one Democrat, Sen. Lou Correa of Santa Ana, voted against the bill, and no Republicans voted for it. It's now headed to the Assembly, where it stands a good chance of becoming law. Last year's version of this same bill, AB 1634, was approved by the Assembly before being defeated in the Senate.

SB 250 calls for the mandatory sterilization of dogs and cats, with the hope of reducing the number of animals who end up -- and often die -- in California's shelters. But it doesn't really accomplish that goal, and what it does should worry anyone who cares about animals, but especially progressives.

Under the bill, every California pet owner must obtain a license to keep a dog or cat who hasn't been sterilized, a license that can be revoked if the owner violates a number of animal laws -- not just big ones like animal cruelty and neglect, but little ones, like letting your dog stand next to your car in a beach parking beach without his leash on. If that happens, you can be forced to spay or neuter your pet, unless a veterinarian certifies that the animal would "suffer serious harm or death if surgically sterilized." If a pet owner can't afford that option or refuses to comply, the animals can be seized and sterilized or even killed at taxpayer expense.

It's easy to see why libertarians and conservatives would object to such a law; asking the government if your cat can keep her uterus isn't something they'd be likely to support, and in all honesty, lifelong liberalism aside, neither do I.

Although it's being sold as a cost saving measure, the California Legislative Analyst's Office determined that SB 250 would increase animal control expenses at the state and county levels, especially in the short run, although they weren't able to put a dollar amount on that increase.

The fact that a bill will cost taxpayer money wouldn't normally be a deal breaker for the Democrats. But the economic problems with this bill aren't limited to its costs for governments. Mandatory spay/neuter laws like SB 250 should be anathema to progressives and liberals because they target

poor people and leave the wealthy virtually unaffected.

Both the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and the Association of Pet Product Manufacturers report that nearly all family pets are already spayed or neutered -- except those belonging to poor people.

While spay/neuter rates among pets owned by middle and upper income people approach 90 percent, only 53 percent of pets owned by poor people are spayed or neutered. The majority of lower income owners say they want to alter their pets but either can't afford to pay for the surgery and/or can't get their pets to a facility that will do it.

In many communities, no form of public or private assistance is available to defray the cost of spay and neuter surgeries, which range

from less than \$100 for a cat to \$900 for a very large dog, depending on local veterinary rates. And for people without a car, simply transporting pets to clinics or hospitals can be nearly impossible.

The progressive solution would be to fund free and accessible spay/neuter for people who want to alter their pets but can't afford the procedure. That's what happened in New Hampshire, which subsequently saw its shelter intake numbers plummet and its euthanasia rate drop by 75 percent. Many California communities, including San Francisco, have done the same, with similar results.

In California's current economic climate, however, funding that sort of service statewide is unthinkable, and SB 250 contains no provision for providing low cost, accessible care for the pets of poor people. Instead it forces low-income families to obtain a veterinary procedure they cannot afford while imposing penalties and fees, all under the threat of having to surrender the pet to animal control authorities -- during a recession, no less.

SB 250 also creates a terrible situation for feral, stray, homeless and community cats. Hint to California lawmakers: No one owns these cats. But under SB 250, many of the people who feed and care for them are considered to be their owners, and would therefore be required to have the cats altered.

If you've ever tried to catch a feral cat or even a frightened pet cat, you might have sympathy for anyone trying to comply with such an order. Besides, when did criminalizing compassion become a progressive cause?

Don't misunderstand: I support programs that trap the cats, alter them and release them into managed colonies located away from areas that are ecologically sensitive. But SB 250? Bad for people, and bad for cats.

If you don't believe me, believe Alley Cat Allies, the nation's leading advocate for feral and stray cats, which says, "Caring for stray and feral cats should be encouraged; but tragically, this bill would mean the very people doing the most to help cats would be breaking the law."

Mandatory spay/neuter laws also violate another important progressive value: choice. Why do Democrats, who vehemently defend a woman's right to make her own medical decisions in consultation with her doctor, ignore the findings of the American Veterinary Medical Association, which opposes mandatory spay/neuter on medical grounds?

While spay/neuter surgery is the right choice for most pet dogs and cats, it nonetheless carries some health risks. Those begin with the small risk of death from anesthesia or surgical complications, but they don't end there.

In a paper published in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, Margaret V. Root Kustritz found that surgical sterilization of dogs and cats can increase many health problems, including the painful, costly and fatal disease known as osteosarcoma, a bone cancer.

Though the risks are small and most owners will (and do) opt for the surgery, isn't the obvious liberal position that it be a matter of choice, reached after discussion with the pet's veterinarian, rather than forced on them by lawmakers in Sacramento who have never seen their pet and are, by the way, not veterinarians?

Of course, it's consistent with progressive ideals to prevent animal suffering and death; we all want that. But the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, in a recent policy statement on mandatory spay/neuter laws, states that they are "not aware of any credible evidence demonstrating a statistically significant enhancement in the reduction of shelter intake or euthanasia as a result of the implementation of a mandatory spay/neuter law."

Democrats recently swept to national power on a populist wave of community empowerment. President Obama campaigned that we should "assume the best in people instead of the worst." He also promised to "go line by line to make sure that we are not spending money unwisely," and pledged in his inaugural address that he would end programs that don't work.

With that in mind, I'd like to ask Democrats in the Assembly to consider something before they vote on this bill: Why would we, as progressives, align ourselves with a law that targets the poor, criminalizes compassion, and takes away medical choice from pet owners and their veterinarians?

California's Democratic lawmakers can save the lives of animals and cut costs without hurting people or violating progressive values. They can vote against SB 250 and for Assembly Concurrent Resolution 74, which urges the adoption of a set of programs that have worked in communities across the country to lower shelter intake and deaths while saving money -- without punitive legislation or putting an unfair burden on low income pet owners.

It's non-binding, so it won't cost the state a cent. In fact, the programs it espouses, such as low-cost spay/neuter programs like the one adopted by New Hampshire, usually result in cost savings in the communities that implement them. And its passage would signal that the days of Democratic support for regressive, uncompassionate and ineffective animal legislation are over.



Issue Analysis: Why Mandatory Spay/Neuter Laws are Ineffective

No dog should ever go unloved or unwanted. Stories of dogs being relinquished to shelters break the hearts of every dog lover.

These issues are the result of a variety of causes. National research organizations have reported that the majority of unwanted dogs in the United States come from owners who are unable or unwilling to train, socialize, and care for their dogs.

As part of encouraging responsible dog ownership, the American Kennel Club (AKC) urges pet owners to spay and neuter their dogs if they do not want to participate in AKC dog shows or performance events or use them in a responsible breeding program. The AKC supports public education programs that teach future pet-buyers and help current

mandatory sterilization policies.

Identifying the Problem

Although MSN may sound like a logical solution to the problem of unwanted dogs, they only address a symptom of the problem. A truly effective solution will require addressing this larger issue.

National studies and anecdotal experiences of shelters across the country demonstrate that economics also plays a significant role in animal relinquishment. Unemployment, tighter budgets, and other monetary concerns including unexpected relocation all contribute to families to giving up pets.

As communities recognize that there are irresponsible dog owners who do not properly train their dogs and who allow

basic animal control laws they are already tasked with enforcing.

Many communities that enact MSN laws find that enforcement can be expensive. A mandatory spay/neuter law enacted in Dallas, Texas, in 2008 resulted in a 22 percent increase in animal control expenditures, as well as an overall decrease in licensing projected to reduce revenue by \$400,000. The City of Santa Cruz, California, experienced a 56% cost increase over the first 12 years of implementation. The City of Los Angeles' budget ballooned from \$6.7 million to \$18 million following implementation. Similar increases in animal control costs following the establishment of mandatory spay/neuter laws have been experienced in communities

“Nearly one in every two families in the United States has a dog, generating a significant demand for well-bred puppies.”



BULLDOG: ISABELLE FRANCAIS FOR AKC

dog owners understand the great responsibility that comes with dog ownership.

Some policymakers and groups assert that the solution is mandatory spay/neuter (MSN) laws. The AKC disagrees. Unlike voluntary programs, mandatory spay/neuter laws have proven to be ineffective. Numerous studies have found they result in significant cost increases and many other unintended consequences for responsible dog owners, local shelters, and the community at large – *without addressing the real underlying issue of irresponsible dog ownership.*

For these reasons, the American Kennel Club is joined by numerous organizations including the American Veterinary Medical Association, the National Animal Interest Alliance, and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in opposing

their dogs to roam or otherwise create a nuisance, it becomes increasingly evident that most problems stem from owner irresponsibility. Mandatory spay/neuter laws will not address these problems; however, they will punish law-abiding citizens who wish to keep an intact animal, while those who already neglect their responsibilities will likely continue that behavior.

Unintended Consequences

Mandatory spay/neuter laws also have a tendency to create problems for communities because they are very difficult to enforce and can be easily evaded by avoiding dog licensing.

MSN laws also greatly increase the workload for animal control officers, who must now also verify the sterilization of residents' pets in addition to the

throughout the country from Colorado to North Carolina to Washington.

Mandatory spay/neuter policies prove expensive for the public as well. When these laws are established, many cities find that their publicly-funded low-cost spay/neuter programs cannot meet the demand, which forces dog owners to pay full price for the procedure. This can be a huge financial burden for low-income dog owners, who may ultimately be forced to choose between harboring an illegal unsterilized dog and turning it over to a shelter because they cannot afford the procedure.

Unintended broader public health and safety consequences should also be considered. The American Veterinary Medical Association's "Dog and Cat Population Control" policy notes that the mandatory nature of these laws may

Continued on next page

result in pet owners avoiding rabies vaccinations and other general veterinary care in order to hide their lack of compliance.

Another disturbing trend arises when these laws prevent responsible breeders from being able to breed and raise quality family pets. Nearly one out of every two families in the United States has a dog. This generates a significant demand for well-bred puppies. Responsible breeders are committed to raising healthy purebred dogs and provide the opportunity for local residents to purchase a quality dog from an expert in the breed who is also knowledgeable about the needs, temperament, and background of the puppy offered for sale. These breeders help potential new owners understand the breed and ensure that a prospective buyer is a good lifestyle fit with the new puppy.

If responsible breeders are forced out of business, those who wish to purchase a purebred dog are forced to seek other avenues. This may include buying puppies over the Internet, where the dogs may be imported from countries with fewer health and safety standards than the United States. Anecdotal evidence has shown a significant increase in the number of dogs being transported into the country, with little to no veterinary oversight and care before the dogs are given to the new owners. A number of these dogs have become seriously ill with diseases such as rabies that are dangerous to both the dog and humans.

Why Exemptions Aren't Enough

Sometimes, instead of an outright spay/neuter mandate, lawmakers will opt to enact laws with stricter regulations on those who choose to not sterilize their dogs. Intact animal permits and differential licensing require those who choose not to sterilize their dogs to obtain a license that is often significantly more expensive than those for sterilized dogs. Some communities do not require licenses unless a dog is intact. Other policies provide exemptions for owners whose dogs are listed with a nationally-recognized registry.

These policies, including exemptions,

punish responsible dog owners simply because they choose to own an intact dog. Responsible dog breeders and owners have a right to own an intact dog if they so choose without being subject to regulations beyond those of other dog owners.



SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIER- MARY BLOOM © AKC

“Public education about responsible dog ownership improves public safety, reduces economic burdens on a community, and preserves the rights of dog owners – all while helping dog owners learn how to care for their pets.”

The AKC encourages dog owners to sterilize their pets unless they wish to participate in responsible breeding programs, performance events, or AKC conformation dog shows. As conformation shows are ultimately designed to judge the quality of breeding stock, all dogs entered into these events must be intact. Mandatory spay/neuter defeats the whole purpose of traditional dog shows!

Some laws offer exemptions to MSN policies for “show dogs”. However, this exemption misses the point that spaying/neutering should be an individual decision made by an owner, not forced by the state. It is also very difficult to prove whether or not a dog is being kept for exhibition. Some mandatory spay/neuter schemes require a dog to be shown at least once a year in order to be exempted from the sterilization policies, but not all breeders show all their dogs every year. In addition, many breeders choose to breed their female show dogs after they have finished showing them to their championships. Other owners may choose to see how a dog develops before making a decision about whether to show

the dog. There are many valid reasons for an exhibitor not to show a dog every year, and this choice should be respected.

What's the Solution?

Targeting the issue of irresponsible ownership is the best solution for addressing dog-related issues in a community. This begins with gathering data about the extent and nature of a possible problem in a community. Does the community have reliable statistics on unowned or unwanted animal populations? Does the community currently have comprehensive animal control statutes to address at-large dogs, nuisance dogs, and stray animals? If so, how are they enforced?

Does enforcement include appropriate fines and penalties? Does the community need additional support to enforce these laws? If existing laws are not being followed or enforced, then adding more laws will not improve the situation. Communities may also want to consider encouraging private organizations to provide/subsidize low-cost

spay/neuter clinics to help give low-income individuals the opportunity to sterilize their dogs if they wish.

One of the most effective ways to ensure compliance is through strong public education programs. These programs cover the basics of responsible dog ownership and local dog laws. The American Kennel Club has a wealth of materials to help shelters, community organizations, schools, and other public organizations educate the public about responsible dog ownership. The AKC also provides resources through thousands of local kennel clubs, located in all 50 states, who are willing to assist local leaders in designing and implementing positive canine education programs.

Addressing irresponsible dog ownership through strict enforcement of animal control laws and strong public education programs are effective and cost-efficient ways to address animal control issues. Public education about responsible dog ownership improves public safety, reduces economic burdens on a community, and preserves the rights of responsible caring dog owners – all while helping dog owners learn how to care for their pets.



**AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUBSM**

MANDATORY SPAY/NEUTER LAWS

BACKGROUND:

Mandatory spay/neuter laws are usually considered by state and local governments in response to animal control concerns in the community. Proponents believe that mandatory spay/neuter laws will reduce the number of animals at the local shelters and strays roaming in neighborhoods. However, these laws have not proven an effective solution to animal control concerns and punish responsible breeders.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- **MANDATORY SPAY/NEUTER LAWS ARE INEFFECTIVE**
Mandatory spay/neuter laws have not proven effective in reducing shelter populations. In fact, some shelters have seen an increase as owners choose to leave their dogs at a shelter if they are unable to pay the costs associated with having their dog spayed or neutered. Moreover, many national research organizations have reported that the majority of unwanted dogs in the United States come from irresponsible owners who are unwilling to train, socialize, or care for their dogs. Imposing a mandatory spay/neuter law will not resolve the issue of irresponsible ownership.
- **MANDATORY SPAY/NEUTER LAWS ARE DIFFICULT TO ENFORCE**
Mandatory spay/neuter laws are extremely difficult to enforce and can be evaded by irresponsible animal owners. Mandatory spay/neuter laws often result in a decrease in the number of dogs licensed, because some individuals choose to not license their animals in order to avoid spaying and neutering their pets.
- **MANDATORY SPAY/NEUTER LAWS ARE COSTLY TO THE COMMUNITY**
Mandatory spay/neuter laws greatly increase the work load of animal control offices, many of which are already strained financially. Animal control offices also find they are euthanizing more animals at the taxpayer's expense, because some owners choose to leave their animals at the shelter rather than complying with the law. A mandatory spay/neuter law also communicates the message that the municipality is not "dog friendly" and sends a strong message that AKC events, which generate a significant amount of revenue for the local economy, are not welcome in the community.
- **MANDATORY SPAY/NEUTER LAWS ARE UNFAIR TO RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERS**
Mandatory spay/neuter laws target all dog owners, regardless of their level of responsibility or the behavior of their animals. The AKC believes responsible owners have a right to use their own discretion in determining whether to alter their animals. In addition, these laws would restrict the rights of numerous responsible breeders who breed and raise purebred dogs for the purpose of showing. These breeders make a serious commitment to their animals and to ensuring the future health, welfare and breed type of their individual breeds. The AKC believes the decision to spay/neuter is best left to responsible owners in consultation with their veterinarian.

A BETTER SOLUTION IS AVAILABLE

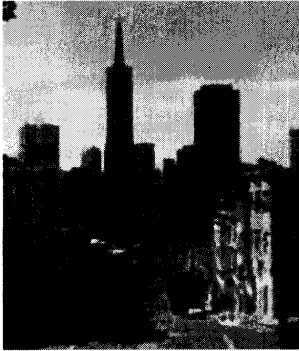
Rather than impose a mandatory spay/neuter law on all dog owners, governments should instead focus on enforcing effective animal control laws and increasing public education efforts. Strongly enforced regulations such as leash laws would prevent irresponsible owners from allowing their pets to run loose, which can lead to accidental breeding. A strong public education campaign teaches community residents how to properly care for their pets and the importance of being a responsible pet owner. The American Kennel Club, as well as many local dog clubs, can assist communities in developing effective animal control laws and public education programs that address the issue of irresponsible ownership while still protecting the rights of responsible owners and breeders.

KC DOG BLOG

Unofficial Watchdog on Animal Welfare Issues

March 18, 2008

BSL/MSN in San Francisco (Part 2 of 4)



After California's state law prohibiting Breed Specific Legislation from being enacted was changed, to allow for cities to create breed specific mandatory spay/neuter policies, San Francisco became the first city in the country to enact a breed-specific spay/neuter program, mandating that all "pit bulls" be spayed or neutered.

The ordinance went into affect February 1, 2006. So with 2 years under its belt, I thought I'd call the San Francisco Animal Control to see how the law was doing.

The San Francisco ordinance has gotten a lot of publicity. Last August, [a story came out in the San Francisco Chronicle talking about how the sterilization law was a success](#) -- noting that the city had impounded 21% fewer "pit bulls" and the number of 'pit bulls' euthanized had dropped 24%. It is also noted in this article that the law went into affect after 12 year old Nick Fabish was attacked and killed when he apparently tried to break up the two "family pit bulls" while they were mating in the house and he was home alone.

Also using only percentages, [the city's animal control office](#) also announced that total bites by "pit bulls" had gone down from being 32% of all bites to making up only 11% of all bites in the first half of the year...although noting that total dog bites had more than doubled in the first 6 months of last year but Carl Friedman advised that the other bites didn't pack the "punch" of pit bull bites and that most of the bites were believed to be minor.

So with all that in mind, I called and asked for the exact numbers myself to find out what is really going on in San Francisco with their law.

What I received back was exactly what I requested. No more. No less. So if you have more questions than this feel free to ask, but I may or may not be able to break down the data further. I also won't try to explain the percentages in the articles quoted above...for the life of me I have no idea where they came from based on the numbers I've gotten.

The numbers I've been given are from 7/01/04-1/31/06 -- the 19 months leading up to the February 1, 2006 start date for the ordinance. I also have the numbers from 2/1/06-8/15/07 -- so the 18 1/2 months following the passing of the ordinance. When it seems appropriate (when the numbers are big enough), I'm going to use the 1/2 month average for bites/euthanasias to project those last 15 days so we're comparing equal timelines. In these cases, I'll give my real number, but put the projected number in parenthesis).

Public Safety

Since my number one goal stated yesterday was protecting people from dogs, and because the ordinance was passed following a major 'pit bull' attack, I'll start with the dog bite numbers.

Bite numbers for the 19 months prior to the BSL/MSN:

Total: 596

Mastiff-Type dogs: 151

(Mastiff Types, by SFAC's definition includes 'pit bulls', St. Bernards, Boxers, Bulldogs, Shar Pei, Rottweilers and Great Danes -- and all their mixes)

Pit bull types and their mixes: 120 (all included) in the 152 above

210 of the bites were listed as "unknown."

So "pit bulls" made up 20% of the total bites pre BSL/MSN. Mastiff types made up 25%.

In the 18 1/2 months following BSL/MSN (19 month projections in parents):

Total bites: 657 (676)

Mastiff Type Bites: 151 (155)

"Pit Bulls and Mixes": 102 (105)

So in comparison:

"Pit Bulls" made up 16% of the total bites, Mastiff types made up 23%.

"Unknown bites" went up to 275.

So, after the ordinance:

Total bites went up 13.4%

"Mastiff-type" dog bites went up by a total of 4 bites.

"Pit bull" bites (a subset of the Mastiffs) went down by 15 bites.

Impounds and Euthanasia

The second reason people give for passing this type of ordinance is because they are trying to control their shelter killing -- of which 'pit bulls' make up a large percentage of. So the following are the impound and euthanasia numbers for the two time periods discussed:

19 Months pre-MSN

Impounds for all Dogs: 3,804

Impounds for 'pit bulls': 1,246

Total Dogs Killed (Euthanasia): 1,156

"Pit bulls" killed: 702

So 'pit bulls' made up 33% of all impounds and 61% of all dogs killed in the 19 months prior to the ordinance. Euthanasia rate is 30% for all dogs, 56% for "pit bulls".

19 month post BSL/MSN

Impounds for all dogs: 3,720 (3,826)

Impounds for "pit bulls": 989 (1,017)

Total dogs killed: 995 (1,023)

Pit bulls killed: 576 (592)

So 'pit bulls' made up 27% of all impounds and 58% of all dogs killed post ordinance. Euth rate is 26% for all dogs, and 58% for "pit bulls".

In total, total dogs killed dropped 3%.

Total 'pit bull' type dogs killed dropped 16%

Total non-pit bull dogs killed decreased 1%.

Tomorrow. We'll look at Kansas City.

Posted at 06:44 AM in [BSL/MSN](#) | [Permalink](#)

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Listed below are links to weblogs that reference [BSL/MSN in San Francisco \(Part 2 of 4\)](#):

Comments



In the first set of bite numbers, Mastiff types and 'pit bull' types are listed separately, yet it says that 'pit bull' types are considered Mastiffs.

Am I reading this incorrectly?

Posted by: [Caveat](#) | [March 18, 2008 at 08:56 AM](#)



Oops, yes I was - although 'pit bull' is included in Mastiff type (but not a lot of other well known Mastiffs..) they've separated them into a sub-category.

Need more coffee.

Posted by: [Caveat](#) | [March 18, 2008 at 08:59 AM](#)



Yeah - -they group them in as "mastiff-type" dogs. I wanted to show both sets of numbers because while the bite numbers for 'pit bulls' have gone down slightly, the bite numbers for the bigger group of large dogs has not...which would be counter (in theory anyway) to Friedman's claim that while the bites are going up, they are less severe. And this is just this one group of dogs -- while bites of other groups have gone up also and we all know that many types of dogs have the ability to create severe problems under the wrong circumstances.

Posted by: [Brent](#) | [March 18, 2008 at 09:02 AM](#)



Since when are pit bulls considered Mastiff types? Oh yeah, since OH decided 16 different breeds were considered pit bulls...

I've said it before I'll say it a million more times before I die...You're not going to get any other correlation than bites by breed if you're ONLY tracking bites by breed. This is like tracking

KC DOG BLOG

Unofficial Watchdog on Animal Welfare Issues

March 21, 2008

BSL/MSN San Francisco (part 3.5 of 4)

I should know better than to put a finite number for a series. Someone always has something even better to share that justifies its own post. This one is well worth a 3.5 and breaking into the series.

So on Wednesday, after my post about San Francisco, I got an email from Terry Houston, PhD. Terry Houston has written two separate reports on the San Francisco BSL/MSN that are quite interesting. I've gotten them posted on the [KCDA Website](#) for everyone to be able to view. They're well worth the fairly lengthy read.

The first article was written, specifically covering dog bites during 2003 and 2004. In the report, Houston analyzes dog bites by breed, gender and reproductive status of the dog, age of the dog, severity of the bite, gender and age of the victim, and zip code. The report was given to the San Francisco Animal Control group prior to them passing the law mandating the spay/neuter of 'pit bulls'. There are a couple of paragraphs that I think are particularly important, so I will pull them out here.

Of the 75 breeds of dog identified in the 435 bite reports, 73% (289) were labeled as mixed. The city of San Francisco may have a larger percentage of mixed bred dogs than the reported estimate of nearly 40% of the dog population in veterinary caseload studies (4, 8). A national survey put the percentage of mixed bred dogs at 51% (9, 10). The identification of such a large number of mixes in the population raises the question of accuracy when identifying dog breeds. Certain mixes may yield dogs that look like "pitbulls" but are in fact not. A dog that is part Australian Cattle dog and part Labrador could easily be labeled a "pitbull" mix. A German Shepherd dog and a Greyhound mix may be labeled the same, particularly if the dog is a "brindle", a color associated with "pitbulls" but is not uncommon in other breeds. The dog may be called a "pitbull"- German Shepherd mix based on coat color alone. Breed identification is very subjective unless the parents of the dogs are known or the dogs are registered with a national registry. Several generations of breeding mixed breed dogs with other mixed makes identification of the specific dominant breed problematic.

One other note is that 87% of all of the dog bites covered were considered minor. This will be fairly important in tomorrow's discussion. Houston also discusses at length the issues that arose with the accuracy of the data that was being analyzed and how better, more consistent reporting is necessary for AC's to know what is going on in their departments.

In conclusion, Houston notes:

The data from the City of San Francisco indicates that mandatory spay/neuter of any specific breed based on reported bites to the city is not an effective method of minimizing dog bites...The risk from an intact dog for the moderate/severe bites shows that reproductive status is not a risk factor. The high portion of males as victims in reported bites also would indicate that bites are very much a human factor...To minimize dog bites the issue has to be addressed to all dog owners, not just particular breeds. Training and socialization of the dog are important factors to help minimize the risk of a dog bite.

Two years later, Houston did a follow-up report seeing how San Francisco's new BSL/MSN law was working. According to the numbers Houston used in the report, here are the reported dog bites for each year. The percent of bites that are listed as "unknown" (so no breed, gender or spay/neuter status is known) is listed in parenthesis. Also note that the new BSL/MSN law took affect in February 2006.

2003 -- 386 (35%)

2004 -- 312 (41%)

2005 -- 366 (36%)

2006 -- 364 (42%)

Houston's conclusions on the study:

Dog bites are more of a result of human interactions with the dog and the lack of understanding of basic animal behavior. Dogs chase things, they have natural prey drive, so are going to run after other dogs, cats and other small animals. When a person runs, walks, skates, bicycles past them, they are likely to give chase. Spaying or neutering is not going to reduce bites without addressing some of the basic problems.

Education on responsible dog ownership and emphasis on basic training, socialization and inclusion of the dog in the household will do more to reduce bites. There is a serious need to start addressing and targeting human behaviors instead of focusing just on the actions of the dogs.

The two articles are great and well worth the read. Houston also details out the issues in the accuracy of the documented data with SF AC. Take the time and check them out -- they're both available [here](#).

Tomorrow. Some of my thoughts on these case studies.

Posted at 10:31 AM in [BSL/MSN](#) | [Permalink](#)

KC DOG BLOG

Unofficial Watchdog on Animal Welfare Issues

March 21, 2008

BSL/MSN - Discussion (Part 4 of 4)

So five days this week, four posts on BSL/MSN - which is basically the mandated spay/neuter of a certain breed of dog. On Monday we looked at the idea of BSL/MSN, and I layed out my criteria for evaluation of different laws. I still think animal control laws and policies should serve one of three goals:

- 1) Protect people from animals
- 2) Protect animals from people (including shelter euthanasia)
- 3) Respect taxpayer dollars that go toward animal control

So over the past 4 days we've looked at a couple of case studies of this law -- looking at the shelter euthanasia numbers and kill numbers for the first two cities to pass mandatory spay/neuter of 'pit bull' laws. On Tuesday, we looked at San Francisco. Wednesday, Kanasas City. On Friday, a different look at San Francisco.

I'll note that both of the cities that instituted the ordinance did so following fatal dog attacks in their area -- which would lead us to believe that the primary reason for the ordinances were for public safety. Although in each case, slowing down shelter killing has also been used as a reason for the ordinances. So how are they doing?

In San Francisco, bite totals remained flat from 2005 to 2006, in spite of the ordinance. However, in the 19 months preceding the ordinance compared to the 19 months following the ordinance bites went up 13%. Although 'pit bull' bites went down, the total number of serious bites and bites by "mastiff" type dogs (basically most large dogs are grouped in this grouping in San Fran) remained flat. In Kansas City, the total number of dog bites dropped 6% -- although the bites attributed to 'pit bulls' increased. Given this, I would speculate that KC's drop in dog bites is actually more due to them also increasing the budget for more animal control officers (KCMO only responded to 20% of their AC calls in 2005) than the actual ordinance itself given that the one grouping of dogs affected by the ordinance actually had more bites attributed to them.

Based on these numbers, there is very little evidence that in the early stages of the BSL/MSN that the ordinance is improving public safety.

Meanwhile, animal euthanasia numbers are also interesting.

San Francisco saw a 3% drop in total euthanasia, with euths to both 'pit bulls' and non-'pit bulls' decreasing slightly, however the percentage of 'pit bulls' that entered the shelter that were euthanized increased by 2 percentage points.

In Kansas City, euthanasia rates went up 7% (450 total kills) between 2005 and 2007 after a big spike in 2006 following the passing of the ordinance. What is more disturbing is that the euth rate for "pit bulls" went up 76% following the ordinance....which is actually one of the specific problems the ordinance was supposed to cure. This leads me to believe that KCMO may be using the ordinance to confiscate pit bulls -- and that this isn't the only story where the dog was unjustly taken from its owner and killed. Taking dogs from otherwise good homes to kill them, only because they are not neutered, is NOT helping.

So the bottom line -- I'm seeing very little evidence that in the early stages of these ordinances that anything is improving in terms of public safety OR decreasing euthanasia. In fact, in each case, one of the two problems has actually become significantly worse since the adoption of the ordinance. This, tacked on to some legal issues that each city has faced due to breed ID (which ties up taxpayer dollars), it really appears as if the ordinances are NOT working. I know T.E. Houston agrees.

Meanwhile, there was something else really interesting that I picked up from doing this little exercise. In the TE Houston study, it was noted that 87% of all reported dog bites were considered minor. In Kansas City, the number ranged from about 88-92%. Of this small percentage of bites that was considered "major" (a very subjective measurement -- in fact, so subjective that the same word isn't used for it in all cases -- some cases are "severe" and others "serious" -- I've included them all in these reports) here is a list of the breed listings for the dogs involved in "serious" attacks in KCMO: Akita, Austrailian Shepherd, Border Collie, Chow Chow, Dalmation, German Shepherd, Golden Retriever, Labrador Retriever, Chinese Shar Pei, Dogue Bordeaux, Pit Bull, Rottweiler, Oldeng Sheeppdog, Bull Terrier, unknown, Cocker Spaniel, English Springer, Bulldog, Bull Mastiff, Great Dane and Siberian Husky.

That's 21 different breeds that have accounted for the 104 major/serious attacks in Kansas City over the past 3 years. How was limiting one "breed" going to help?

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KC DOG BLOG

Unofficial Watchdog on Animal Welfare Issues

June 29, 2010

Topeka, KS Considering BSL Repeal

Last week, the Topeka Capital Journal wrote that the city of [Topeka is considering repealing the city's breed specific laws](#). The Topeka law currently requires all 'pit bulls' to be licensed and microchipped. If a dog is suspected of being in violation of the law, then the city confines the suspected 'pit bulls' at the local Humane Society until owners are either cleared or charged in municipal court.

For the past decade, the city's animal control unit has been over budget by about \$27,000 a year (a fairly large amount for a smaller community like Topeka that has amounted to \$272,751 over the past decade) -- and the vast majority of those overruns is because of their need to confine the suspected 'pit bulls'.

"These are not dogs that exhibited aggressive behavior," said Assistant city attorney Kyle Smith. "They're just running loose or otherwise in violation of our breed-specific ordinances."

Meanwhile, many times there can be 20-40 dogs in the shelter that are awaiting their fate and often the humane society has to kill dogs of other breeds at the shelter in order to make space for the 'pit bulls'.

"Studies show that cities with breed-specific laws are not any safer," said Smith. "Stronger laws against aggressive and dangerous dogs which hold the owners responsible are seen as more effective."

I hope the council listens to Mr. Smith -- he seems to get it. Smith has made some efforts to learn a lot about this issue. Last January, the University of Kansas Student Animal Legal Defense Fund sponsored a presentation by Best Friends' Ledy Van Kavage entitled "Due Process and Doggie Discrimination," and Smith, and several other representatives from the city were in attendance.

Following the presentation, the city put together a committee to address the city's dangerous dog law -- and the committee featured the city attorney, a city council person, a representative from Helping Hands Humane Society and the president of the Kansas Student Animal Legal Defense Fund group.

The proposal the city is looking at is a solid breed-neutral approach that focuses on animal cruelty, focuses on promoting low-cost spay/neuter services, and focuses on targeting aggressive dogs regardless of breed.

It looks like a great option for the city of Topeka and is similar to the trend we're seeing in other places.

Our friends over at the [Game Dog Guardian](#) have some more details on the committee that was formed, including links to the budget spreadsheets and Mr. Smith's proposal to the council.

Individuals can make a difference in their community with the right approach and working to educate council members on the information that is available and help them realize the realities of their archaic laws.

Posted at 08:49 AM in [BSL Repeals](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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June 16, 2010

Delta, BC looks to repeal Breed Specific Law

[Delta, BC is looking at repealing breed-specific legislation.](#)

Their current ordinance automatically designates 'pit bulls' as dangerous and requires them to be kept in a special structure when on their owner's property and muzzled when walked on a leash.

The new ordinance would remove these restrictions to focus more on the behavior of the animals, not the breed.

"The problem is people, not the animals," said long-time resident Robert Campbell.

According to the draft bylaw, there is no list of dog breeds that are listed as "genetically prone to fight other animals or people." One of the key elements to the municipal solicitor Greg Vanstone says is "the wide range of human behavior that dogs may be exposed to."

Apparently Mr. Vanstone put together a nice report for the council -- but I have been completely unable to find it on the city website, so if anyone finds a link please post it in the comments.

Delta is a medium-sized city (approximately 100,000 population) in British Columbia. Hats off to the city of Delta and their willingness to listen to experts in their community and take steps to improve their canine legislation.

Posted at 10:00 AM in [BSL Repeals](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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May 05, 2010

Putnam County, WV repeals Breed Specific Law

Last year, Putnam County, WV passed a law that specifically targeted pit bull-type dogs in their community.

Yesterday, [they repealed the ordinance](#) and replaced it with an ordinance that targeted aggressive dogs based on behavior, not on how they look.

"A vicious dog is a vicious dog, regardless of what the breed is," said Commission President Joe Haynes -- who voted against the original ordinance last year.

"Whether a dog is vicious or not should be based on its behavior, rather than its breed. You've got people who have dogs of that breed who are family pets who've never exhibited (aggressive) behavior."

Congrats to the folks in Putnam County who continued to talk to their commissioners, and to the commissioners for listening and eventually getting this right.

Posted at 09:15 AM in [BSL Repeals](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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April 23, 2010

Streator, IL repeals breed restrictions

The community of [Streator, IL unanimously approved a new law](#) that will focus resources on dogs with complaints of being aggressive vs just singling out "pit bulls". The previous breed-specific law was passed "several years ago".

Streator is a small community of about 14,000 people in North-Central Illinois -- and is the hometown of Clyde Tombaugh, who discovered the planet(?) Pluto.

The repeal of their breed specific legislation is part of a trend across the nation of cities that are beginning to realize that the laws are not an effective way of dealing with dog bites in their communities.

Posted at 09:51 AM in [BSL Repeals](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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April 22, 2010

Scotland Parliament passes bill to repeal breed ban

The [Scottish Parliament today approved their new dangerous dog law](#) they've been calling "dog Asbos" in a unanimous decision. The new law gives councils greater power to impose penalties for owners of badly behaved dogs and will focus on "deed not breed". The law would replace several laws dealing with dogs in the country, including the Dangerous Dogs Act, which bans four breeds of dogs in Scotland.

Dog Asbos was proposed by MSP Alex Neil. [In his proposal](#), he notes that the Dangerous Dogs Act was "[difficult to enforce and a huge drain on resources.](#)" *"It is clear that a dog's breed is only one factor which may affect its behavior. Attempting to define the law purely in relation to breed has failed to protect the public."*

The statistics support Neil. Over the past decade, [Scotland has seen an over 150% increase in dog attacks](#).

Bill Reilly, [President of the British Veterinary Association](#) commented:

"The key message is that any dog can show aggression, particularly if it is not handled and trained properly, so legislation that provides the tools to target irresponsible ownership before it becomes a problem is very welcome. The rest of the UK should now look at Scotland and replace the failed breed-specific

| [legislation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.](#)"

The law is not yet final, but seems on pace to be soon. Great work by the folks in Scotland in listening to the professional experts in their community and making changes to a clearly failing law.

H/T to [Ryan O'Meara at Dog Magazine](#) and his great coverage of this law.

Posted at 04:21 PM in [BSL Repeals](#), [UK Dangerous Dogs Act](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(7\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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November 14, 2009

Puerto Rico becomes the next to repeal ban on Pit Bulls

In 1998, Puerto Rico passed legislation that banned "pit bulls" and "Pit bull mixes" from the island. Earlier this week, they made a major step in repealing the 1998 ban when their [legislature passed a bill to repeal this ban](#). (this article was run through Google Translate, so it's a little rough to read). The bill now just waits final signature from Governor Luis Fortuno.

The removal of the ban was strongly supported by the College of Veterinarians in Puerto Rico as well as the Pit Bull Association of Puerto Rico.

It is estimated 50,00 'pit bulls' currently live in Puerto Rico -- and because of the ban, more than 3,000 were killed in the past 2 years alone.

As people learn more and more about 'pit bulls' and the ineffectiveness of the laws that target them, more and more places are deciding to repeal their bans in favor of more effective (and rational) dangerous dog legislation that targets the dog based on its behavior, not "breed".

[Here's a second article](#), with the same, yet somewhat contradictory numbers (including some different population numbers, which should have translated well).

Congrats to the people and veterinarians in Puerto Rico.

Hat Tip to Jodi at [Bless the Bullies](#) on this, which is where I saw the news first.

Posted at 08:31 AM in [BSL Repeals](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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November 09, 2009

Oak Harbor, WA Repeals Breed Specific Ordinance

In a 6-0 unanimous vote, the city of Oak Harbor, WA [voted to repeal their breed-specific ordinance](#). The city's ordinance, originally passed in 2006, required all 'pit bulls' to be held in a secure pen, be muzzled while on leash, and other restrictions. The vote held last week repeals all breed specific language and is now focused on targeting dogs based on their behavior, not breed. Commissioners hope that the change will decrease the number of these types of dogs that are killed at the shelter.

In [August](#), when the issue [first came up for a repeal](#), the difficulty of enforcement became a major topic of the conversation:

*"From an animal control officer's point of view, this is a **really difficult issue**" said Police Chief Rick Wallace.*

The Burden would be on the city to prove any delinquent dog's breed, and that may mean Oak Harbor would have to foot the bill for a doggie DNA test.

***From an enforcement point of view, it's almost impossible**, Wallace said.*

*"I don't want this to turn into an emotional thing " City Administrator Paul Schmidt said **"We're looking at it strictly as a fact-based issue."***

And the fact is, breed determination can be tricky and costly business.

"Our own insurance doesn't recommend BSL," said Schmidt. "We support the behavior based approach."

When you take emotion out of the equation, and base your decision solely based on facts, breed neutral legislation -- that targets aggressive dogs based on behavior, not the way they look - becomes the only logical conclusion. More and more cities like Oak Harbor are realizing this, and bypassing BSL for more effective and enforceable laws, and repealing the ordinances that are already in place. Meanwhile, some who hold onto archaic ideals [are being forced out of their positions](#).

Nice work by the fact-focused administrators in Oak Harbor.

Hat Tip: [Stop BSL](#).

Posted at 11:15 AM in [BSL Repeals](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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October 23, 2009

BSL - An International Failure

Earlier this week, the German state of Schleswig-Holstein (one of 16 German States) repealed its ban on "Pit Bulls". According to [the article](#) (which is in German - this is the translation of the first two lines of the third paragraph that was sent to me from someone who lives there):

'CDU and FDP want to protect citizens against irresponsible dog holders. The race list (i.e breed ban) has turned out as not suitable for this and, hence, is abolished in the dangerous dogs law.'

It's been interesting trying to read about the "rasseliste" in Germany, and about how many of the same problems that exist with it in the US are the same in Germany - including [the cost of the impounding and keeping the animals](#), and [problems with accurate breed identification to determine which dogs are included in the breed ban](#), and which ones are not.

(Sorry for the rough translations -- I used Google Translate for the articles and they come by very rough -- the original links are [here](#) and [here](#) if you are fluent in German or know of a better translator).

While our friends in Western Europe followed us into the world of breed bans, it appears they are being quicker than us to jump off the bandwagon in search of more effective solutions to their dog bite problems. Schleswig-Holstein now joins other areas of Western Europe like [Italy](#) and [The Netherlands](#) to have repealed their breed bans just in the past 2 years.

BSL is not just a failure in the US -- it is truly an internationally failed policy. Time to learn from our mistakes, and move on.

Posted at 01:31 PM in [BSL Repeals](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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April 02, 2009

News article on the Greenwood, MO Repeal

I noted this [a few weeks ago](#), but recently, Greenwood, MO repealed their long-standing ban on 'pit bull' type dogs. I'm bringing it up again because the Green Summit Dispatch, the monthly community newspaper that covers Greenwood, just released [their story about the repeal](#). I'm going to post most of it here - -if only because it's such a refreshing read. All of the emphasis is mine:

*"In a long anticipated move, the Greenwood Board of Aldermen **struck down a mistake commonly made in many municipalities** when they unanimously voted to drop the Breed Specific Legislation language in Greenwood's dangerous dog ordinance. Politicians in Greenwood have long been on the record that they do not believe specific breeds are necessarily dangerous dogs. In fact, it was the source of a citizen submitted question in the 2008 Candidate Forum where **candidates unanimously responded that they were against any laws which targeted specific breeds**. The revised ordinance is now **Dog Specific** rather than Breed Specific.*

*The resolution of this issue was a pleasure to observe. The system worked from start to finish. It may have taken nearly a year, but **the Board of Aldermen responded appropriately to what has been a common misconception about the American Pit-bull Terrier perpetuated by our mainstream media**. Greenwood is now **one of the leading small communities in the area with regard to dog legislation**."*

You can read the rest [here](#). With earlier stories on the topic [here](#) and [here](#) (and yes I was involved in the "Lengthy and boring" presentation noted in the latter article --gee, thanks guys.)

Posted at 11:58 AM in [BSL Repeals](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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March 23, 2009

Greenwood, MO Repeals BSL

Last week, the Greenwood, MO city council voted unanimously to repeal their ban on 'pit bulls'.

Greenwood, is a small community that was once a small town, but now has become more or less an outer ring suburb of the Kansas City metro.

Greenwood passed a ban on 'pit bulls' 20 years ago when many cities passed breed bans due to the scare created by the Time and Sports Illustrated articles on the 'pit bulls'. The ban was so old in fact, that several of the city council members didn't even know they had a ban until we brought it to their attention.

The repeal represents an excellent case study in how to get a ban repealed. Several local residents got involved in following the political candidates in the most recent elections – asking questions about the ban at forums. They rallied others to vote and got dog-friendly candidates in office. Soon after, several members of KCDA were invited to give a presentation to the council where we talked about why they should repeal the breed ban.

A few months later, they had crafted a breed neutral ordinance which passed with a unanimous vote.

We are thrilled about the repeal. Greenwood has now joined Edwardsville, KS as Kansas City area communities that have repealed their long-standing breed bans. Rational thinking based on fairness, what actually works, and based on sound thinking is winning. Meanwhile, it also demonstrates that no matter where you are, it is important that you get involved in your local politics. Not only is it an option for you, it is your responsibility -- it's what makes our system work.

More on that later this week.

Posted at 04:45 AM in [BSL Repeals](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(8\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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AGGRESSION AND DOGS

“NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE FOUND BETWEEN BREEDS.”



INTRODUCTION

On July 5, 2000 the government of Lower Saxony, Germany ruled that 14 breeds of dogs were especially dangerous and placed restrictions on the ownership, management and breeding of dogs of these breeds. The breeds cited included Bull Terriers, American Staffordshire Terriers, Pit bull Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, Rottweilers and Dobermans. Exemption from the restrictions required that the owner and dog pass a standardized temperament test administered by veterinary behaviorists at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Hannover, Germany. A passing score demonstrated that the dog displayed no exceptional aggressive behavior or aggressive behavior in inappropriate situations.

**Dogs of
the targeted
breeds signal
their intent
just like
other dogs**

MATERIALS AND METHODS

415 dogs of the targeted breeds were tested in 21 situations of dog-human contact and 14 situations of dog-environment contact. The dog's behavior in each situation was scaled from 1 to 7.

1	No aggressive behavior
2	Visual or acoustic threat behavior while backing away or remaining stationary
3	Bite movements while backing away or remaining stationary
4	Bite movements while moving forward but stopping at some distance
5	Bite with preceding threat signals
6	Bite with no preceding threat signals
7	Bite with no preceding threat signals and unable to calm within 10 minutes

70 Golden Retrievers, having been volunteered by their owners, were also tested using this same standardized temperament test.

RESULTS

- There was no significant difference between the volunteered Golden Retrievers and the dogs from the targeted breeds that were required to submit to the test in the occurrence of aggressive behavior in inappropriate situations.
- Dogs of the targeted breeds signal their intent just like other dogs.
- Dogs of the targeted breeds are statistically no more likely to show inappropriate aggressive behavior than are Golden Retrievers.

No indicators of greater dangerousness of any of the then-restricted dog breeds were found. Rather than regiment dogs by breed, more emphasis should be put on the dog owners' education.

This study contributed to the repeal of breed specific legislation in Lower Saxony.

For additional information:

Schalke et al., "Is breed specific legislation justified? Study of the results of the temperament test of Lower Saxony", *Journal of Veterinary Behavior*, (2008) 3: 97-103.

Ott et al., "Is there a difference? Comparison of golden retrievers and dogs affected by breed specific legislation regarding aggressive behavior", *Journal of Veterinary Behavior*, (2008) 3: 134-140.

Dr. Esther Schalke holds a degree in Veterinary Medicine from the University of Hannover in 1997 and a Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine from the Department of Animal Welfare and Behavior of the University of Veterinary Medicine of Hannover.

She has been a practicing animal behavior therapist since 1998 and runs the Animal Behavior Clinic at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Hannover, where she teaches courses in animal behavior, learning theory and behavior problems in dogs as well as in cats. She runs puppy socialization and pet dog training classes, training classes for SAR dogs and police dogs. She lectures nationally and internationally on various aspects of animal behavior.

Her recent areas of research include the various aspects regarding aggressive behavior in dogs. For example, temperament testing, assessing and comparing aggressive behavior in various dog breeds, including Pit Bull Terriers, Golden Retrievers, and others according to the guidelines of the Dangerous Animals Act of Lower Saxony, Germany (GeTTVO) of 05.07.2000.



Esther Schalke, PhD., DVM

A COMPARISON OF VISUAL AND DNA IDENTIFICATION OF BREEDS OF DOGS

We are all aware of the newspaper articles, magazine stories, and TV segments that show pictures of dogs and then reveal DNA breed analyses of the dogs. Surprise – the DNA results are not what were expected based on the appearance of the dogs or the owners’ beliefs. Those of us who walk through shelters and animal control facilities compare the posted breed descriptions of the dogs to what they look like to us – with frequent differences of opinions. Those who have worked at shelters and similar facilities are aware that as dogs move through the steps in admission or during their stay that their breed descriptions may change. It is my impression, when visiting animal control or adoption agencies, that most medium to large size dogs with straight, short/ medium length brown hair coats are cast as German shepherds or shepherd

mixes, dogs with a black spot on their tongues are designated Chow mixes, and most medium sized, stocky, broad headed, small eared dogs with a short hair coats are pitbulls or pit-bull mixes.

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It is not easy to visually identify the breeds of dogs of unknown parentage accurately. Sometimes dogs just don’t look like either parent. Scott and Fuller’s work on the genetics and social behavior of dogs involved studying purebred dogs, F1 crosses of purebreds, backcrosses and F2 crosses.¹ Photographs of some of these F1 and F2 puppies depict that they do not resemble either purebred parent, nor do the photographs of the F2 generations dogs look like their mixed breed parents. We don’t know how many of the offspring did look like their purebred ancestors, but clearly not all resembled parents or grandparents.

Shelter dog breed assignments may be based on what the dogs look like to someone at the shelter or because owners relinquishing their dogs have identified the dogs as a specific breed. Newborn and young puppies may be identified as a certain breed because the mother dog resembled a purebred dog. In the latter case, the sire of the litter could have been any breed or several dogs could have fathered puppies in the same litter. When the puppies grow up they don’t look anything like their mother or litter mates. These breed or mixed breed identifications may eventually find their way into data bases – be it through population data, dog bites, serious dog attacks, behavior problems, or disease statistics.

Rarely are owners permitted to simply fill out forms that ask about the breed by only stating that the dog is a mixed breed or of unknown parentage. If they do so, the follow-up question often is “What is it mostly?”, or “What is its most predominant breed?”, or “What does it look like mostly?” This information may be solicited by insurance companies, landlords, housing associations, licensing agencies, mandatory dog bite reports, veterinary

medical records, the media, and researchers trying to determine the likelihood of involvement of specific breeds in study populations. For example, in the methodology of one elegantly designed study, owners were asked “what breed they considered their dog: if more than one breed was specified, they were asked which breed they considered to be predominant.”² This article became part of the impetus for many recommendations and restrictions intended to reduce dog bites.

High profile articles in JAMA and JAVMA have reported dog bite fatalities and listed breeds involved in such attacks.^{3,4} The data used was obtained by “combining data from the National Center for Health Statistics

and computerized searching of news stories. Karen Delise has presented compelling arguments in her recent book, *The Pit Bull Placebo*, that undermines conclusions and implications of these reports.^{5,6}

A short report in press in the Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science indicates low agreement between the identification of breeds of dogs by adoption agencies and DNA identification.⁷ The dogs in this study were of unknown parentage and had been acquired from adoption agencies. In only a quarter of these dogs was at least one of the breeds proposed by the adoption agencies also detected as a predominant breed by DNA analysis. (Predominant breeds were defined as those comprised of the highest percentage of a DNA breed make-up.) In 87.5% of the adopted dogs, breeds were identified by DNA analyses that were not proposed by the adoption agencies. A breed must have been detected at a minimum of 12.5% of a dog’s make-up to be reported in the DNA analysis.

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Reports of DNA analyses of percentages of pure-bred dog breed ancestry, while accurate most of the time, are not infallible. The laboratories providing such analyses may have qualifiers in their reports stating that there is an 85% or 90% validity of the results and indicate which results have lower confidence levels. Different testing laboratories

may report different results depending on which dogs were used to develop their standards and how the laboratories analyze the samples.⁸ As the tests are refined, the same laboratory may report slightly different results at different points in time.

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analysis, as well as concerns about reliability of data collected based on media reports, draws into question the validity and enforcement of public and private polices pertaining to dog breeds.

Dr. Amy Marder, Animal Rescue League of Boston and Director for the Center for Shelter Dogs, has proposed that dogs adopted from shelters in the U.S. simply be identified as “American Shelter Dogs”. This might solve a lot of problems, as well as promote pride and ownership of an “American Shelter Dog.”

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