

Jomsky, Mark

Subject: FW: Opposition to Ordinance Mandating Spay-Neuter of Pit Bull and Pit Bull Cross Breed Dogs

From: Anne Dove [mailto:annedove@me.com]

Sent: Monday, January 27, 2014 9:35 AM

To: Bogaard, Bill; Stone, Rhonda; district1; Cruz, Christian (Field Rep); West, Jana; Sullivan, Noreen; De La Cuba, Vannia; Madison, Steve; Morales, Margo; Tornek, Terry

Subject: City Council Agenda Item #15 (1/27/14) - Opposition to Ordinance Mandating Spay-Neuter of Pit Bull and Pit Bull Cross Breed Dogs

I strongly oppose the proposed ordinance mandating spay-neuter of pit bull and pit bull cross breed dogs and request that it not move forward for future consideration. However, should City Council choose to further consider this ordinance, I request that its consideration be deferred consistent with the timeline Council provided at the October 7, 2013 meeting.

This revised ordinance is even more problematic and flawed than the October 7, 2013 version and based on erroneous assumptions about the dog breeds specified, the ineffectiveness of mandatory spay-neuter policies, and the nature of "dangerous dogs". Based on the context of previous City Council discussions, it is clear that part of the motivation for this current ordinance is public safety relative to dangerous dogs even though the ordinance fact sheet describes the rationale for this ordinance as being that "pit bulls comprise a disproportionately high number of unwanted dogs in Pasadena." This lack of transparency about the multiple purposes of this ordinance is problematic. If the City is concerned about dangerous dogs, the focus should be on breed-neutral dangerous dog and irresponsible owner laws, and public education. If the City is primarily concerned about the over-population of "pit bull and pit bull cross breed dogs", the focus should be on efforts to partner with the PHSSPCA to expand their low cost spay neuter program and public outreach/education programs that promote responsible dog ownership. Using mandatory spay-neuter laws to address public safety and dangerous dogs is misdirected and ineffective.

Ordinance Timing:

At the October 7, 2013 City Council meeting, several people, including myself, voiced strong opposition to the proposed mandatory spay-neuter of all cats and dogs in Pasadena. The meeting minutes reflect that:

"By consensus, the item was withdrawn to allow for the completion of the canvassing of animal licensing by the Pasadena Humane Society, with staff to return with the ordinance for future consideration in 6 to 9 months, and for the Legislative Policy Committee to discuss at its next meeting strategies to further pursue changes in the law at the state level with local representatives in order to allow banning of specific dog breeds."

Given this outcome of the October meeting, I was disheartened to recently learn that the City was pursuing a modified mandatory spay-neuter ordinance prior to the 6 to 9 month period specified at the October meeting. I am concerned that pursuing this ordinance within a shorter time frame will exclude interested members of the public from commenting on this revised proposal. Some may perceive the timing of this modified ordinance as an attempt to minimize public comment.

Also, the canvassing being conducted by the Pasadena Humane Society SPCA was intended in part to educate Pasadena residents about responsible dog ownership, and until the benefits of these efforts is understood, it would be inappropriate to consider any mandatory spay neuter ordinance, even one that is focused on specific dog breeds.

Why this Ordinance Should Not Move Forward:

Beyond my concerns about the timing of this ordinance, I am also disappointed and frustrated that several of the well-founded concerns expressed about the October 7, 2013 proposed ordinance have not been adequately addressed in the current proposed ordinance. As a reminder, my previously stated concerns about mandatory spay-neuter laws included the following:

1. Mandatory spay neuter laws do not effectively reduce the number of dogs in shelters.
2. Education and incentives are more effective than regulation and enforcement. The Pasadena Humane Society & SPCA's (PHSSPCA) highly success (and highly in-demand) SNIIP (Spay Neuter in Pasadena) program provides a

cost-effective, voluntary means for pet owners to have their dogs spayed and neutered. The increased capacity of their new facility will expand the number of dogs that can be economically sterilized without mandating spaying and neutering.

3. Many professional veterinary and animal welfare organizations oppose mandatory spay neuter regulations.
4. The assumption that spaying and neutering yields net positive health benefits, especially in juvenile cats and dogs, is erroneous and a gross generalization.
5. Decisions about a pet's reproductive status and surgical procedures should be made by informed pet owners in consultation with their veterinarians.
6. The criteria for "exemptions" does not adequately address the realities of show and competition dogs.
7. The draft ordinance would prevent responsible breeders from being able to breed and raise quality family pets.

But beyond these earlier concerns, laws that target specific breeds/breed mixes are inappropriate, unfair and based on misinformation about the nature of dog aggression and the targeted dog breeds. Responsible dog owners would be unjustly targeted, punished, and discriminated against just for having a dog of a specific breed. Why should these owners be punished when they and their dogs have done nothing wrong?

A diverse range of professional organizations focused on legal and public policy issues, public health, animal welfare and animal behavior have taken positions against breed-specific legislation, including the following:

- American Bar Association
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- National Animal Control Association
- American Veterinary Medical Association
- American Working Dog Federation
- American Kennel Club
- American Humane
- American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)
- Best Friends Animal Society
- Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)
- National Animal Interest Alliance
- Association of Pet Dog Trainers
- International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants
- International Association of Canine Professionals
- National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors

Conclusion

I have been a Pasadena resident for 16 years and long time dog owner who volunteers in dog rescue, and participates in training, showing and competing with my dogs. I am also a member of an American Kennel Club (AKC)-affiliated national breed club, for which I am a member of the Ethics Education committee, and I am an active member of an affiliated regional dog breed club. While I do not own a "pit bull", I strongly oppose the proposed ordinance mandating spay-neuter of pit bull and pit bull cross breed dogs and request that it not move forward for future consideration. However, should City Council choose to further consider this ordinance, I request that its consideration be deferred consistent with the timeline Council provided at the October 7, 2013 meeting.

Sincerely,

Anne Dove
1147 North Wilson Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91104

Jomsky, Mark

Subject: FW: DO NOT PASS "PIT BULL" ban

From: EVegan Gray [mailto:evegan@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, January 27, 2014 12:45 PM

To: E Gray

Subject: DO NOT PASS "PIT BULL" ban

Please spend time doing something productive for the community instead of getting into people's personal choices about the dogs they love.

Telling people what kind of dogs they can have is just like telling people what gender they can marry. It gets overturned and is frustrating and expensive.

I love my boxer-staffordshire terrier mix. She is a wonderful dog.

PASADENA CITY COUNCIL -- do not pass a "pit bull" ban.

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Instead of Google, use goodsearch.com to seach the web and designate Stray Cat Alliance - SCA gets money each time you search!

Iraheta, Alba

From: Varaz Gharakhanian <varazg@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2014 5:22 PM
To: De La Cuba, Vannia; Bogaard, Bill; district1; Morales, Margo; Madison, Steve; Cruz, Christian (Field Rep); West, Jana; Sullivan, Noreen; Tornek, Terry
Subject: Breed specific laws

Dear public officials,

We have intrusted you with making the right decision based on facts and public's best interest, I respect that. I beg you to please dig deeper and learn more about American Pit Bull Terriers or any specific breed subject to specific laws and consideration.

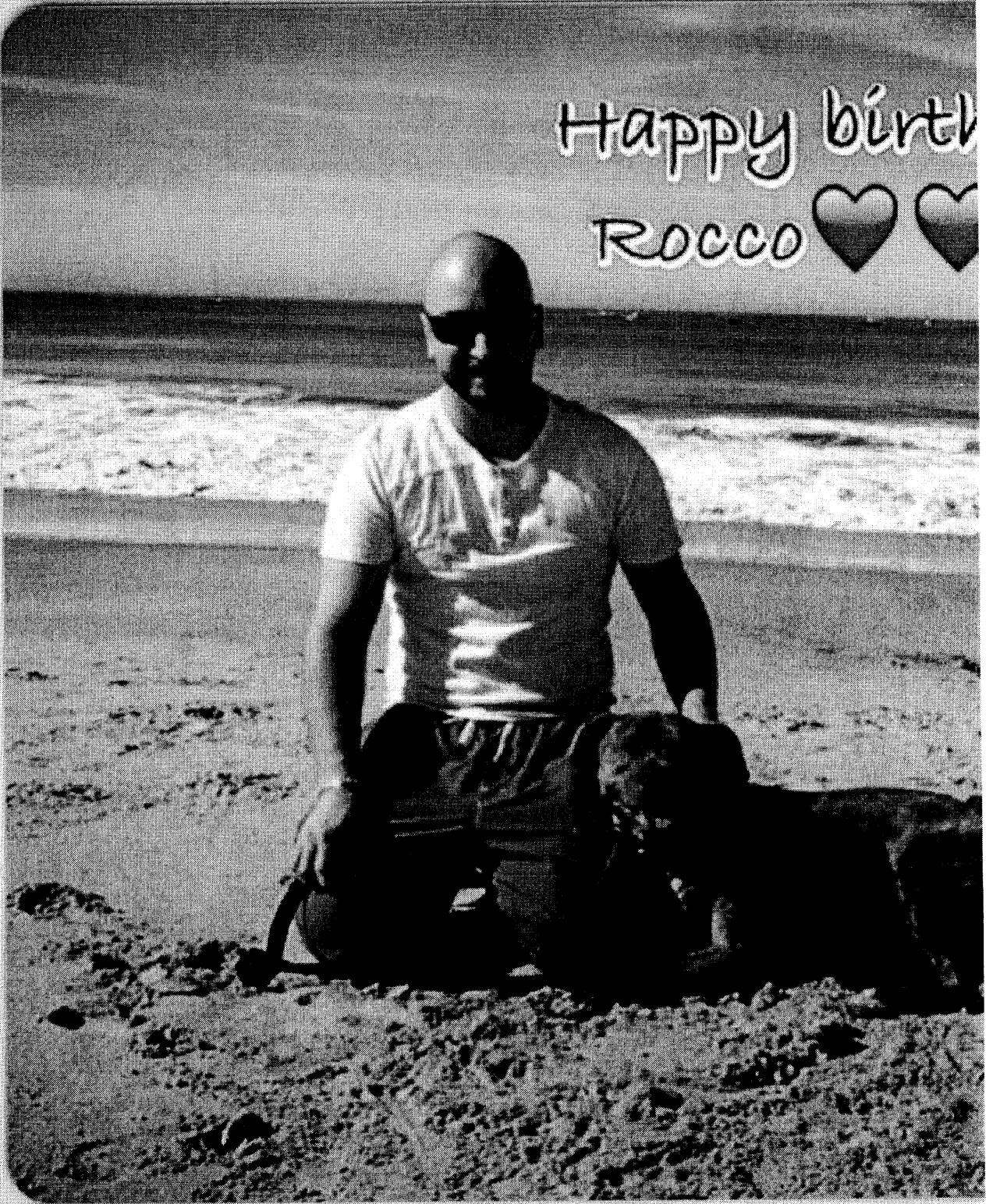
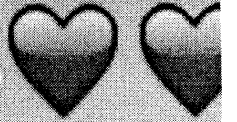
I am an American citizen and an American Pit Bull Terrier owner. My APBT's name is Rocco. He is a rescue and he will be 4 years old on March 1st. I beg your permission and time to bring Rocco for a visit and give you some information about this specific, often misunderstood breed. Please do not listen to the media. Our public's hope and faith in Washington is long gone, please be the rock and a just entity in our community. Please make the right decision.

Rocco and I love you.

This pic is from his 3rd Birthday last March. My wife and I take him to the beach and he gets In-N-Out for

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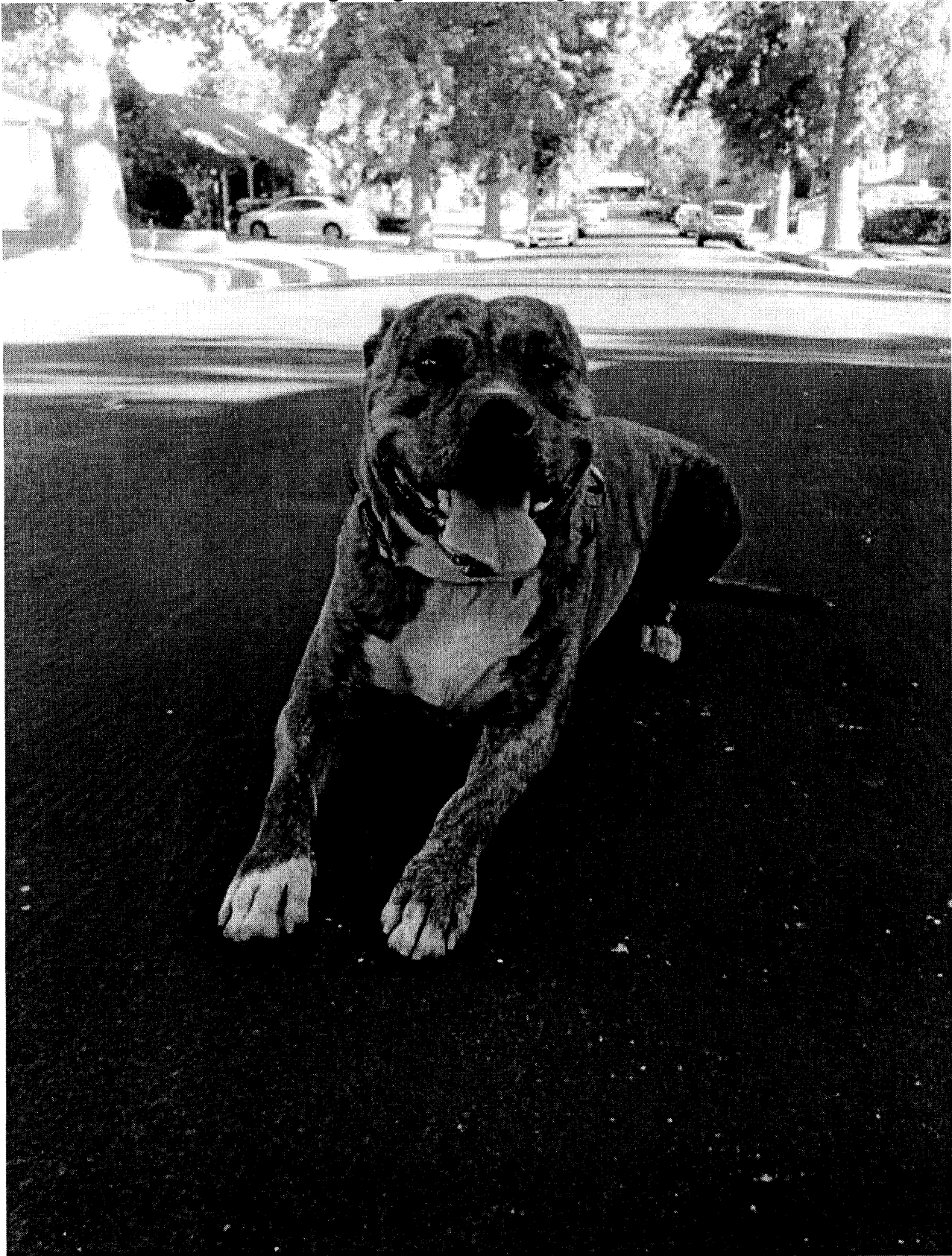
Happy birth
ROCCO



This is Rocco at the beach.



This is Rocco taking a break during a long walk, what a big smile!





Here is Rocco and his best friend Neo (friends kid, comes over to play with him regularly)



Neighborhood kids bring him treats for Halloween

Best,

Varaz Gharakhanian
818.257.4689

Jomsky, Mark

Subject: FW: pit bull ordinance FW:

From: Katja Margaret Guenther [mailto:katja.guenther@ucr.edu]
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2014 9:30 AM
To: McAustin, Margaret; Morales, Margo
Subject:

Dear Councilperson McAustin,

I am contacting you to voice my concern about the proposal to require the spaying and neutering of pit bull-type dogs in Pasadena. I am a tenured faculty member in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Riverside, with research expertise in animals and society, particularly human-dog interactions and animal welfare, as well in policymaking. I am also a Pasadena resident in District 4.

I am certain you will agree that policy decisions should be guided by empirical evidence and sound logic as to their need and efficacy. **Extant analyses of breed-specific spay/neuter laws do NOT support their implementation. Furthermore, there is no logical reason for creating and enforcing such a law.**

First, **no research exists to show that mandatory spay/neuter laws reduce pet homelessness or reduce instances of dog bites.** In fact, research shows that such laws are consistently *harmful* to human and animal welfare. On its surface, mandatory spay/neuter sounds like a good idea: force people to spay and neuter their pets and the population of unwanted pets will go down. Alas, the social world is more complex than that. Every single study examining the effects of mandatory spay/neuter shows that such laws *increase* shelter intakes, *increase* shelter killing of adoptable pets, and *decrease* the amount of funding spent on free and low-cost spay/neuter services. A punitive approach to animal control further alienates those dog owners least likely to spay/neuter their pets, and thus decreases the likelihood of successful educational efforts by animal control around pet ownership, which in turn exacerbates homelessness and increases neglect of companion animals. Because study after study consistently shows that mandatory spay/neuter is ineffective at reducing pet homelessness and dog bites, **no major animal welfare organization in the United States supports mandatory spay/neuter for any breed of dog.** Happily, the Pasadena Humane Society is already actively engaged in providing the free and low-cost spay/neuter services that HAVE been consistently shown to reduce pet homelessness and instances of dog bites. Residents in PHS' service area can have pit bulls and Chihuahuas spayed/neutered for free. Should City Council want to continue to reduce the number of unwanted pets, it should focus on supporting PHS' programs for free and low cost spay/neuter services and educational outreach rather than implement harmful policies like mandatory spay/neuter.

Second, although the author of the proposed policy has used scare tactics to present pit bulls as a threat to the community, **there is no reason to believe that the introduction of spay/neuter laws for pit bulls in Pasadena will reduce the risk of dog bites for Pasadena residents.** This is true for a number of reasons. **Pit bulls are no more likely to bite people than any other type of large breed dog.** In fact, research studies of dog bites show that dog breed is not a statistically significant predictor of dog bites at all; rather, the context and nature of human-dog interaction predicts dog bites. The overrepresentation of pit bull-type dogs in non-peer-reviewed research stems from the fact that such reports rely on newspaper reports of dog bites for data. There is no state-level or national public system for tracking dog bite reports. Emergency rooms track dog bite admissions, but not by type of dog. Databases of dog bites thus rely on bites reported in the media using Lexus Nexus searches of newspaper reports—and bites involving pit bulls are far more likely to attract media attention than dog bites from other types of dogs. This results in significantly skewed data.[1] Furthermore, even if we accept the falsehood propagated by Councilperson Madison that pit bulls are more likely to bite, **mandatory**

spay/neuter will not reduce the number of pit bull-type dogs in Pasadena, and therefore would not reduce any purported bite risk. All areas adjacent to Pasadena have no similar rules, and area shelters are full of pit bull-type dogs who, along with Chihuahuas, represent the majority of shelter pets due to their popularity in communities that are least likely to participate in spay/neuter. Pasadena residents will continue to have ready access to pit bull-type dogs, and will continue to adopt them.

Third, **a mandatory spay/neuter law targeting pit bulls would make Pasadena regressive, rather than progressive, in its animal control policies, reversing the direction both the city and animal welfare experts across the country have taken.** Every major animal welfare organization in the United States focuses on increasing access to free and low-cost spay/neuter services, educating dog owners about the availability of such services, and working with dog owners to support responsible ownership, including training socializing, and containing dogs properly and humanely. No major animal welfare organization in the United States supports mandatory spay/neuter for any breed of dog. Locally, the popular and successful No Kill Los Angeles (NKLA) initiative coordinated by the Best Friends Animal Society and supported by the City of Los Angeles includes educating the public about both responsible ownership of pit bull-type dogs and the merits of keeping these dogs as pets. In fact, the mascot for the NKLA campaign is a pit bull-type dog. Pasadena's regressive policy would buck the dominant trend in the region and the country toward promoting responsible ownership of pit bull-type dogs and mainstreaming pit bull-type dogs, who are often well-suited as family companions. Focusing on promoting the adoption and responsible ownership of pit bull-type dogs is the best route to reducing their numbers in shelters. **These dogs and their owners do not require increased regulation; they, and the public, require increased education.** Mandatory spay/neuter will pull resources away from initiatives that DO work to reduce pet homelessness and dog bites, and set Pasadena on a path animal welfare experts know does not work.

In sum, the proposed ordinance mandating spay/neuter for an ill-defined and broad category of dog stands to damage the City of Pasadena in several ways, and its implementation is not supported by any available data. Such a law will set back the efforts of the Pasadena Humane Society to develop positive community relationships. The additional cost of enforcing the new law will funnel resources away from programs that research consistently shows DO help reduce pet overpopulation. The ordinance is bringing significant negative publicity to our community, positions Pasadena as a regressive and punitive community, and has thrown into the question the capacity of our City Council to make decisions based on empirical evidence, rather than emotional appeals. In the absence of a single research study that supports the contention that breed-specific mandatory spay/neuter has ANY positive benefit for communities, and in the presence of multiple studies showing that mandatory spay/neuter is deleterious for companion animals and communities, I hope you will vote to reject this misguided policy, which stands to do no good, and instead to do a great deal of harm.

Sincerely,
Katja M. Guenther
Associate Professor of Sociology and Graduate Adviser
University of California, Riverside
1125 Mesita Road
Pasadena, CA 91107

[1] Media sensationalism further distorts the realities behind most pit bull attacks. The toddler killed by pit bulls last fall in Colton, California, for example, in a tragic case which Councilperson Madison likes to invoke, was left unattended in a home, jumped out of a window into a yard with between five and ten pit bull mix dogs in it, and bled to death from what could would not have been a life-threatening wound if only his family noticed he was gone immediately rather than not bothering to look for him for more than thirty minutes (the boy's uncle and grandmother, who were caring for him at the time of the accident are facing multiple criminal charges for their roles in this case). Alas, the

majority of dog bites involving ALL types of dogs in the United States are the outcome of poor and/or misguided parental supervision of children and dogs and/or poor human/dog communication.

The Third Metric

Redefining Success
Beyond Money & Power

January 27, 2014



Nuns Adopt A 9-Year-Old Pit Bull 'Because Nobody Else Is Going To Want Her'

The Huffington Post | By Megan Griffio Posted: 01/25/2014 1:47 pm EST | Updated: 01/27/2014 8:59 am EST

On Sunday, three nuns from Nyack, N.Y., walked into Hi Tor Animal Care Center with one intention: to adopt a dog that no one else wanted.

When the women met Remy, a 9-year-old pit bull who'd been at the shelter in Pomona, N.Y., since October, they knew she was the animal for them.

"I wanted to bring a dog home that might get euthanized if we didn't take her," Sister Veronica Mendez told News 12. "And when I noticed the sign said '9 years,' I said, 'Virginia, we want this one, because nobody else is going to want her.'"



West Artope, executive director at Hi Tor, told The Huffington Post that he was surprised that the nuns -- all over 70 years old -- weren't deterred by the thought of owning a pit bull.

"Most people have a pretty bad understanding of pits," Artope told HuffPost. "But Remy was sensitive to the sisters, especially to Sister Virginia, who walks with a cane. She kept up with her and was so attentive."

Remy now lives with the nuns at Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine. Artope told HuffPost that the sisters didn't have to pay for the adoption -- Pauline Jarney, a Hi Tor volunteer, and Roberta Bangs, a Hi Tor board member, were so moved by the nuns' actions that they covered the bill.

CORRECTION: A previous version of this article incorrectly stated that the nuns were from Pomona, N.Y. They are from Nyack, N.Y.



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Iraheta, Alba

From: cityclerk
Subject: FW: No BSL

From: Sarah Kaiser [<mailto:sarah.b.kaiser@gmail.com>]

Sent: Monday, January 27, 2014 10:14 AM

To: Bogaard, Bill; Robinson, Jacque; McAustin, Margaret; Kennedy, John; Masuda, Gene; Gordo, Victor; Madison, Steve; Tornek, Terry; Beck, Michael; Gutierrez, Julie; Mermell, Steve; Bagneris, Michele; cityclerk; Foster, Siobhan; Walsh, Eric

Subject: No BSL

Pasadena City Council:

I am writing in opposition to the “breed-specific” spay and neuter law being pushed through by Councilman Steve Madison.

Before writing, I took the time to watch video from the November City Council meeting to better acquaint myself with the Council’s argument. The people who spoke up against the law brought various sources and arguments while Councilman Steve Madison kept arguing the same point using dogsbite.org as his source for the statistics. Dogsbite.org is clearly biased against Pit Bulls. It wouldn’t even be considered a legitimate source in an elementary school research project.

Here is information by credible sources:

This August, the White House came out against any kind of Breed Specific Legislation.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/20/obama-breed-specific-legislation_n_3785911.html

The American Bar Association

RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association urges all state, territorial, and local legislative bodies and governmental agencies to adopt comprehensive breed-neutral dangerous dog/reckless owner laws that ensure due process protections for owners, encourage responsible pet ownership and focus on the behavior of both dog owners and dogs, and to repeal any breed discriminatory or breed specific provisions.

<http://www.mspca.org/programs/animal-protection-legislation/animal-welfare/companion-animal-welfare/american-bar-association-resolution-on-repealing-bsl.pdf>

The US Centers for Disease Control strongly recommends AGAINST breed-specific legislation.

<http://www.asPCA.org/about-us/asPCA-policy-and-position-statements/position-statement-on-breed-specific-legislation>

The most comprehensive study of dog bite fatalities was recently published by the American Veterinary Medical Association. They too came out against BSL.

<http://www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com/blog/potentially-preventable-husbandry-factors-co-occur-in-most-dog-bite-related-fatalities/>

In disposition tests, Pit Bulls and other “bully” breeds consistently prove that they are not aggressive by nature. They rank between Labrador Retrievers and Golden Retrievers. The most aggressive dog breed? Dachshunds.

Let’s teach our children not to judge anything simply by the way it looks. Because regardless of how you dress it up, any type of “breed specific” legislation is discrimination.

Sarah Kaiser
203-520-5928
sarah.b.kaiser@gmail.com

P.S. Statistically you're 60 times more likely to be killed by a coconut than a pit bull.

Jomsky, Mark

From: Vicky L Kimball <vickyk@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2014 12:00 PM
To: Bogaard, Bill; Robinson, Jacque; McAustin, Margaret; Kennedy, John; Masuda, Gene; Gordo, Victor; Madison, Steve; Tornek, Terry; Beck, Michael; Gutierrez, Julie; Mermell, Steve; Bagneris, Michele; cityclerk; Foster, Siobhan; Walsh, Eric
Subject: Breed Specific Law Opposition

Dear Members of the Pasadena City Council & Mayor of Pasadena,

I am writing to express both my concern and opposition to the pending Breed Specific Law Legislation that the City of Pasadena is considering.

As a citizen residing within the City of Los Angeles, I am concerned that the passing of any BSL is not only a step backwards with regards to discrimination based on genetics and physical appearance, it is also a step toward a very slippery slope of various bureaucracies dictating the rights of the citizens based on biases, inaccurate data, insubstantial so called "facts", hearsay and isolated events that are sensationalized by the media.

As a nurse of going on 29 years, I can testify that in order to address a physiological problem or an operational problem the most effective way is to do so based on Scientific Based Research not hearsay and popular opinion. I am certain that many of my peers have provided you accurate statistical data to support why passing BSL is not addressing the "real" underlying issues related to dog bites, fatalities related to dog attacks and overall animal overpopulation.

Simply said, this is a "Human" problem not a specific "Breed" problem. As with any social problem, education and bringing awareness to the public is what will make effective change. Let's face it, the laws we have in place are not being enforced such as dog chaining etc..

The passing of BSL has failed in other cities and states because it is flawed. We should learn from those failures and shift our focus to addressing the real problem at hand, that being the "Human" component through education and use/enforcement of the dog laws that already exist. It all comes down to owner responsibility and common sense which requires education, education and more education.

Thank you for reading another point of view,

**Vicky Padilla, RN
and proud owner of a Pitbull**

Stewart, Jana

From: Carolee Reiling <caroleereiling@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2014 10:22 PM
To: Bogaard, Bill
Cc: Madison, Steve; Tornek, Terry; De La Cuba, Vannia
Subject: friends with Matt and pit bull ordinance

Dear Mayor Bogaard,

I am a Pasadena native (born at Huntington), and a homeowner in Pasadena. My siblings and parents all live in Pasadena. I also have a 9 month old baby and a Pit Bull. I live in Terry Tornek's district. My pit bull was adopted 4 years ago from the Pasadena Humane Society where she earned the HIGHEST behavioral rating ("green") on all of her behavior tests. She is a wonderful pet. She lives in my home with another dog and cats and a baby. My brother and his wife and 2 sons also have a pit mix adopted from the Pasadena Humane Society, she also is a fabulous dog, lives with 2 boys, another dog and cats.

My animals are already altered. I do believe in spay/neuter, but requiring spay/neuter without providing low cost or free services, is only going to result in people losing their pets (which are an important part to people's livelihood) and these pets being euthanized by the Pasadena shelter. The mandatory spay/neuter you are seeking to enact appears to be a thin veil for an ultimate goal of a breed specific ban as you are proposing to ask CA to overturn its ban on BSL.

You've probably heard a million times: its not the dog but the owner. Well, this is very true. I personally have been bit by a dog only once in my life. It was a purebred Labrador Retriever. I urge you to keep Pasadena as an open, inviting, friendly, progressive city and not to enact such close-minded legislation which seeks to blame a breed of dogs (and I see you are even including mixed breed dogs). Why not enact stiffer penalties for leash laws

I am also a friend of your son's (from the Altadena tennis club) and I hope you will consider my comments as from a credible source. And Steve I am also friends with your wife.

I will not be able to make tomorrow night's meeting because my baby goes to bed early, but I hope you will please consider these comments.

Thank you, Carolee Reiling
774 S. Hudson Ave. Pasadena 91106
caroleereiling@gmail.com
626-354-3315

Stewart, Jana

From: Karyn Sedgwick <karynsedg@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2014 1:18 PM
To: Bogaard, Bill
Subject: Please spay and neuter pit bulls!!!!

It's such an obvious issue, and solution.

I've been wanting to ban pitbulls entirely for decades, and nobody listens. Until recently when Riverside did it.

England banned pitbulls decades ago.

We SHOULD discriminate against them. Just Google "pitbull attacks," and hundreds and hundreds of innocent people, and other pets, have been mauled and killed.

We can enjoy dogs without having threatening pitbulls in our communities. Get a different breed! Spaying doesn't hurt the dog. We mUST phase them out.

Iraheta, Alba

From: cityclerk
Subject: FW: Pit Bulls
Attachments: Pit_Bull_Prejudice_Part_TwoFinal-1.docx; IMG_0626.jpg

From: shenkerstoll@aol.com [mailto:shenkerstoll@aol.com]

Sent: Monday, January 27, 2014 10:50 AM

To: Bogaard, Bill; Robinson, Jacque; McAustin, Margaret; Kennedy, John; Masuda, Gene; Gordo, Victor; Madison, Steve; Tornek, Terry; Beck, Michael; Gutierrez, Julie; Mermell, Steve; Bagneris, Michele; cityclerk; Foster, Siobhan; Walsh, Eric
Subject: Pit Bulls

Dear Mayor & City Council members,

I have come down with the flu & will not be able to make tonight's meeting on this proposal by CC Madison. I do not live in Pasadena but i do rent space at the Troop Unitarian Church for our Animal Advocacy Museum. We have grown very fond of Pasadena but if this passes, we will consider moving to a more animal friendly city. I, along with so many others, oppose this ordinance as it is discriminatory and punitive to a certain breed that is actually a very loving and loyal dog. I have a pitbull & she has never hurt anyone, including our daughter. I host many benefits for animals & never has she hurt anyone. I have enclosed a photo of my husband, Doug Stoll, a fifth grade school teacher, with our sweet pitbull, Slade, the red dog. More importantly, I have enclosed a piece by my friend, Scotlund Haisley, who has been a humane officer for many years and now runs his own group, Animal Rescue Corps, www.animalrescuecorps.org, that busts dog fighting rings, illegal puppy mills and hoarding cases. I have volunteered on some of these missions. He is an expert on dog behavior and has witnessed first- hand the tragedy of this kind of discrimination. I kindly ask you to read this and oppose this ordinance.

What Pasadena should do is pass a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance to stop the overpopulation of all breeds of dogs and mutts and cats. By passing such a law, not only will you be preventing the needless deaths of pets who couldn't find homes but you would be cutting back on the expenses to your city to run your shelter.

I thank you for your time and attention.

Patty Shenker
Tarzana, Ca. 91356

Pit Bull Prejudice Part Two: The Solution

As discussed in my last blog, breed-specific legislation (BSL) seeks to ban specific dog breeds that are assumed to be dangerous to society. Some municipalities and even entire countries are initiating and imposing dog breed bans while others are repealing them and forbidding future breed bans.

Currently, the dogs most often subject to bans are those breeds labeled “pit bulls”. These breeds are subjected to bans because there is widespread prejudice based on assumptions and misunderstanding of their temperament.

All of the discourse and conflict distorts a basic truth: Dogs are born with the instinct to be worthy of their family pack – to bond with their leader. Determined dogs will serve their guardian’s bidding with all of their being. Treated and socialized well, they can become loving family members and even Canine Good Citizens. But if the dogs are neglected or manipulated and encouraged to perform negative behaviors, the consequences for the dogs and humans can be tragic. It is this abuse that is at the root of the dog-human problems that BSL attempts, but fails, to address.

I personally oppose breed-specific legislation for these reasons:

- **BSL is not proven to achieve its purported main function – to keep people safe from dog bites.** For example, a study found that the number of dog bites in Great Britain remained the same despite a ban on three breeds the government classifies as pit bulls. In 1993, the Netherlands enacted a ban on pit bulls after three children were killed. The country repealed the law in 2008 saying that it had not solved the dangerous dog problem.
- **BSL misplaces blame and punishes the innocent.** BSL calls for the round up of all individuals of a certain breed, regardless of whether they have ever bitten anyone. BSL victimizes responsible dog guardians and their companions and imposes societal prejudice against both. Innocent life is lost and public wellbeing is hurt by any legislation that wrongly incriminates a majority due to problems with a handful of deviants. BSL doesn’t seek to make irresponsible dog guardians liable for their deeds and its purpose isn’t to impose penalties on those who commit crimes to animals. Dog bites are caused by humans who don’t socialize or who abuse their pets. More than 70% of dog bites come from unneutered male dogs and most fatal dog attacks involve dogs who aren’t spayed or

neutered. More than 80% of dog bites come from dogs who are abused or otherwise recklessly maintained.

- **BSL is reactive and expensive**, blindly applying resources into sticking a Band-Aid on a problem, rather than preventing it. Solutions must be proactive and strike at the root of the problem, preventing the potential for dangerous situations to occur, to achieve lasting change. BSL costs taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars to round up and kill all banned dogs, regardless of their innocence. Prince George's County, MD, spends more \$250,000 a year to enforce its pit bull ban, though a 2003 study found that the ban had not improved public safety and that all animal problems were covered by other laws. This money could be spent much more profitably elsewhere. The dogs whose lives are taken and the devastated families who loved them pay a much higher price.
- **BSL relies on arbitrary breed labels.** Most of our nation's 78 million dogs are mixed breeds thereby defying lineage classification. Also, the term "pit bull" is a generalized description and many dogs who are not pit bulls but share some physical characteristics are unfairly placed in this category. A report on dog bites from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which does not support BSL, maintains that, "Because of difficulties inherent in determining a dog's breed with certainty, enforcement of breed-specific ordinances raises constitutional and practical issues." Visit this website to try to "find the pit bull": www.pitbullsontheweb.com/petbull/findpit.html
- **BSL puts dogs in danger.** BSL makes banned dogs more desirable to criminals and other irresponsible individuals. Since these individuals can't be seen with the dogs, they keep them in hiding, typically in extreme confinement, and sometimes leave them to starve to death in basements or abandoned buildings. Loving guardians may also hide their banned dogs and forsake daily walks and even veterinary care.

The intriguing, lovable pit bull is truly an innocent casualty of discriminatory generalizations that result in illegitimate breed-specific conclusions. The American Temperament Testing Society, an independent research group that has been publishing results since 1977, reports that only 1 in 1,000 pit bulls are "disqualified" due to aggressive tendencies. American Pit Bull Terriers and American Staffordshire Terriers pass temperament tests at a rate of 86% and 83.9%, respectively. These rates are similar or superior to those of Beagles

(80.3%), Golden Retrievers (84.2%), Jack Russell Terriers (84.1%), Border Collies (81.1%) and Standard Poodles (85.3%).

Yet dog breeds with good reputations find loving homes more easily than dogs labeled as pit bulls. Millions of pit bulls end up in shelters and rescue groups every year. Half or more of the dogs in large city shelters are pit bull types. Small town shelters are also overwhelmed by a national average of 33% pit bull population. The results are tragic; the national average death rate of sheltered pit bulls is 93%. So, for every 100 pit bulls who end up in a shelter, only seven survive. Pit bull breeding is a major contributing factor to this problem and regulations on it must be explored.

BSL cannot address the problems “dangerous dogs” present to society or the problems society presents to dogs. The solutions that will work are not easy and require progressive systems. Regardless, the focus of any action must be on promoting responsible dog guardianship and holding the irresponsible accountable. While my idea is admittedly ambitious, I offer one possible solution – pet guardianship regulations should be enacted.

Dogs are classified as property and we pay an annual licensing fee for our dogs, as part of our property tax. However, there is no process to license animal guardians. Driving a car or selling liquor requires people to go through a verification process in order to be approved by the government. Citizens need to earn credentials that are government validated because fellow citizens are impacted by the conduct of each individual. When adopting from an animal shelter, certain criteria must be met because, likewise, having an animal affects the guardian, the animal and those around them. If animal guardianship required licensing, it would demonstrate that it is a significant responsibility and elevate it to earned privilege. People would have to provide evidence that they are prepared for the responsibility and would take the decision to get a companion more seriously because they will be held accountable for that choice.

I believe that guardian licensure will find an open legislative door. The Animal and Plant Health Inspective Service, a department of the USDA, states that:

“Breed or type specific bans are difficult and costly to enforce, provide a false sense of security to the community and, where enacted, no data currently supports them as effective in reducing incidence of dog bites; therefore, they are not recommended... The most effective means of reducing prevalence of dog bites are education and placing responsibility on the owner, not the animal. Legal mechanisms that enable the competent authorities to impose penalties or otherwise deal with

irresponsible owners are necessary. Mandatory registration and identification schemes will facilitate the effective application of such mechanisms.”

Guardian licensing legislation wording and implementation of the law would be tailored for each community, just as there are differences in animal control and sheltering systems across the country. The entities that would be charged with overseeing this law must be behind it, have an implementation plan in place and be prepared for its outcomes if it is to be successful. If communities are not supportive or prepared, it should not be enacted. If applied responsibly, guardian licensing would not only keep communities safe but also offer a community more than just an alternative to BSL. It provides a way to directly and proactively address irresponsible guardianship, which animal shelters are already doing with adoption requirements. It is time to expand these ideas to society as a whole.

It is time to dismiss discussion of breed-specific legislation. BSL is an abusive idea that doesn't work but rather offends common decency and wastes resources and innocent lives. We need to employ preventative measures, such as guardian licensure, to make real and lasting change in keeping people and animals safe. Please join me in defense of those who are persecuted by noble intention but ignorant implementation. Together we can create a humane civilization for every member of the animal kingdom.

