



National Animal Care & Control Association

40960 California Oaks Rd. #242
Murrieta, CA 92562
(913) 768-1319
naca@nacanet.org
www.nacanet.org

NACA Is Opposed to Breed Specific Legislation

The National Animal Care & Control Association's fundamental goal is to achieve safe and humane communities; Our priority is safety, first and foremost, in the most effective and most comprehensive way possible. Because everyone benefits from a safe society – both people and pets. Sometimes, however, dog encounters go awry. According to the most consistently maintained data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), about 1 dog out of 220 each year delivers a bite considered serious enough by the person involved to present for medical attention at an emergency department. This means that roughly one person in a thousand is affected in this way each year.

At NACA, we believe our communities can make these unfortunate incidents even less common. However, breed specific legislation (BSL) or breed discrimination is ineffective as it fails to enhance public safety, is expensive to enforce, and violates the property rights of responsible dog owners. We want our communities to be protected against dangerous dogs – and we want abused dogs to be protected from reckless owners. The focus of any policy should be on the behavior of the dog and the behavior of the owners.

BSL is defined as “a law or ordinance or policy that regulates or completely bans the keeping of dogs of or presumed to be specific breeds, dogs presumed to be specific breeds and/or dogs which are or presumed to be mixes of one or more of those breeds.”

BSL or breed discrimination may include any of the following:

- Mandatory spay-neuter
- Mandatory muzzling
- Liability insurance requirements
- Special licensing and additional fees
- Mandatory microchipping or tattoos owner/walker age requirements
- Property posting requirements
- Confinement and leash requirements
- Breed specific pet limits sale or transfer notification requirements
- Restrictions on access to certain public spaces with the dog [e.g.: public parks, school grounds]
- Required town-issued items [e.g.: fluorescent collar; vest]
- Training requirements
- Requirement that photos of the dog and/or owner be kept on town file



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- Insurance policies that discriminate against breeds of dogs
- Housing policies that discriminate against breeds of dogs

NACA agrees with the American Veterinary Medical Association's statement:

"The issue of dangerous dogs, dog bites and public safety is a complex one. Any dog can bite, regardless of its breed. It is the dog's individual history, behavior, general size, number of dogs involved, and the vulnerability of the person bitten that determines the likelihood of biting and whether a dog will cause a serious bite injury. Breed-specific bans are a simplistic answer to a far more complex social problem, and they have the potential to divert attention and resources from more effective approaches."

NACA also agrees with the 2012 American Bar Association resolution that:

"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."

Rather than implementing BSL, NACA recommends a four-pronged approach provided by the National Canine Research Council to reduce dog bites in communities.

These are:

1. Focus on the behavior of the dog and the behavior of the owner.
2. Improved husbandry practices, better understanding of canine behavior, education of parents regarding safety around dogs.
3. Consistent enforcement of dangerous dog/reckless owner ordinances in communities.
4. Effective laws that hold owners responsible for custody and control of dogs regardless of breed or type.

References:

Community cost of BSL: <http://bestfriends.guerrillaeconomics.net/>

National Canine Research Council BSL Q and A:

<https://www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com/public-policy/breed-specific-legislation-faq>

Dog Bites Problems and Solutions: <https://www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com/news/new-edition-dog-bites-problems-and-solutions>