



Breed Bans are Bad for Ontario

January 24, 2005

Bill 132 is based on misleading statistics.

- The Ontario government states that pit bulls make up less than 1% of the dog population but account for 50% of serious bites. This statement is based on dog bites reported in the media.
- A Canadian study of serious dog bites found "pit bull type" dogs account for less than 5% of serious bites. German Shepherds, Rottweilers, Cocker Spaniels and Golden Retrievers are the top biters by breeds.
- A U.S. study shows that only 0.0012% of pit bulls in the U.S. were involved in fatal attacks. In contrast, 0.014% of Great Danes and 0.014% of St. Bernards were involved in fatal attacks.¹
- In Winnipeg, "pit bull type" dogs were banned in 1990 but the total number of dog bite incidents increased in 1991.

The true facts about "pit bulls"

- There is no scientific evidence that pit bulls, or any other breed of dog, are inherently dangerous. The likelihood a dog will bite depends on a number of factors including (a) the behaviour of the owner; (b) the demeanor of the dog; (c) the bodily characteristics of the dog; and (d) the behaviour of the victim.²
- Pit Bulls do not have unusually strong or locking jaws. In proportion to their size, the jaw structure of pit bulls is no different than any other dog of comparable size.
- Pit Bulls are no longer bred for dog fighting and have not been for more than 100 years. Willingness to fight is not a recognized or desirable characteristic of pit bulls among breeders and Kennel Clubs.
- It is impossible, based on existing DNA testing, to identify a particular dog as belonging to particular breed.

Who will pay to enforce Bill 132?

- Breed specific laws are costly and impossible to enforce.
- Legislation was passed in England in 1991 banning specific breeds of dogs. The cost to administer the legislation in London alone was almost \$3.0 million (£ 1.3 million) in the first year.³
- In 2001, Baltimore, Maryland, the local administration voted against breed specific legislation in part because it would have cost over \$750,000 USD per year to enforce.⁴
- The recent breed specific municipal by-law in Windsor has resulted in over 200 dogs being dumped in animal shelters in two weeks.
- There is no infrastructure established to enforce the proposed ban.

THERE IS A BETTER SOLUTION FOR ONTARIO: Focus on the behaviour of irresponsible owners, not on banning specific breeds. Calgary has reduced bites by 70% through aggressive licensing and enforcement since 2000. The program is financed by the licensing fees and fines, not by tax dollars.

¹ American Canine Foundation, *Breed Specific Legislation: Does it work? Dangerous Dogs or Dangerous Owners?* (September 23, 2003), p. 9

² Dr. Irene Sommerfeld-Stur, *Regarding the Question of Particular Aggressiveness of Dogs Based on Affiliation with Certain Breeds* (October 2002), p. 9

³ American Canine Foundation, *supra* p. 5

⁴ American Canine Foundation, *supra* p. 5