



POSITION STATEMENT

BREED SPECIFIC LEGISLATION

Position

The Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo & Stratford Perth does not support breed-specific legislation.

The Society believes that a community approach to responsible pet ownership, one that focuses on the behavior of the individual dog and owner, is the most productive way to protect the public and promote animal welfare and education.

Rationale

- The law punishes dogs for their appearance, while research shows that aggression actually results from factors including lack of training and socialization, lack of exercise and mental stimulation, poor breeding, mistreatment, health issues and failure to spay/neuter (which reduces aggression).
- There is no objective method for establishing whether a mixed breed dog falls under the legislation's "pit bull" definition. Furthermore, the definition is vague.
- Research shows that individual dogs may be dangerous, regardless of breed, while the legislation punishes many dogs that are not dangerous.
- Various jurisdictions have found BSL to be ineffective in their areas, as the BSL targets specific breeds instead of irresponsible owners. The Centres for Disease Control in the US noted that, not only is it virtually impossible to calculate bite rates for specific breeds, but dogs of any breed can become dangerous if they are raised to be aggressive and individuals who exploit dogs will simply turn to another breed.
- Restricting breed ownership has not reduced the incidence of dog bites.
 - A survey of reported dog bite rates in 36 Canadian municipalities found no difference between jurisdictions with BSL and those without.
 - Likewise, a 2010 Toronto Humane Society survey found no change in dog bites in Ontario in the years before and after Ontario's BSL.
 - In an article written by Global News in 2016, statistics show that even after 10 years of BSL in effect in Ontario, the number of dog bites has increased.
 - Calgary, however, saw a five-fold reduction over 20 years – from 10 bites per 10,000 people in 1986 to two in 2006. Rather than banning breeds, Calgary uses strong licensing and enforcement plus dog safety public education campaigns.