

February 9, 2015

To Whom It Concerns:

I am writing to submit comments regarding House Bill 5361. I have been rescuing and fostering dogs, mostly breeds that are currently considered "bully breeds" and believe strongly that breed discrimination needs to end. Dogs, regardless of the breed are not born violent and if do become involved in a situation, it is always the fault of the owner who failed to provide the dog with the environment they needed.

Research has consistently shown that the environment in which you raise a dog is the number one determinant in dog temperament. Any dog is capable of violent acts, not because of breed, but instead their experiences. And not only does breed discrimination discriminate against dog breeds, but also dog owners. Why should someone with a German Shepherd, a dog equally as capable of violence be afforded more opportunities and rights than someone who opts to own a pit bull? Having rescued many pit bulls, I can tell you that the vast majority are gentle and affectionate, making breed discrimination completely baseless, from my perspective.

One of the saddest and unfortunate consequences of breed discrimination is the colossal number of very adoptable dogs who never find homes. Dogs deemed as dangerous due to their breed are likely the last to find homes as potential adoptive families are afraid they will lose insurance.

Everyday, 3000 pit bull/mix dogs are euthanized because they were overlooked or misjudged. Thankfully, there are people who judge the dog by its actions, not its breed and work tirelessly to empty the shelters by finding them homes, where they are just as likely as any other breed to acclimate seamlessly into their new home without issue or concern.

It is time to stop letting fear and misconceptions drive policy. We need to make decisions based on research, statistics, and common sense. Breed discrimination has no place in public policy, because it simply cannot be supported by evidence. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

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