

October 24, 2013

Position Statement on Breed Specific Legislation

Adopted by the Sonoma Humane Society Board of Directors

The Sonoma Humane Society (SHS) believes in and advocates for the best policies, procedures, and practices as they apply to the animals of Sonoma County and beyond. Towards that end, the SHS Board of Directors adopts the following:

Sonoma Humane Society opposes Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) concerning dogs. They are ineffective, costly to administer and enforce, and unfair to responsible dog owners.

- 1. Over 40% of dog owners in the US consider their dogs to be classified as 'mutts.'¹ Many breeds exhibit similar facial and body characteristics. Identifying specific breeds based on appearance is a time consuming job; it is virtually impossible to accomplish accurately.**
- 2. Enforcing Breed Specific Legislation is costly and includes such expenses as:**
 - **Payroll and benefits for additional Animal Control Officers to enforce the laws.**
 - **Kenneling for the seized animals.**
 - **Additional vet care for the seized animals.**
 - **Costs of killing seized animals.**
 - **Court costs when an owner chooses to dispute the seizure.**
- 3. BSL encourages the false public perception that other breeds are inherently safe**

1 American Pet Products Association

There are many alternatives to BSL as identified by the American Humane Society, Centers for Disease Control, the American Veterinary Medical Association, and The National Canine Research Council:²

1. Education

Adult supervision plays a key role in prevention. Socializing of dogs is key. Raise community awareness on the benefits and importance of licensing.

2. Spaying and neutering

Aside from the benefit of controlling runaway dog populations, intact dogs can be unpredictable and dangerous.

3. Better bite reporting

Researchers agree that better statistics could help identify key factors which could lead to improving public safety.

The Sonoma Humane Society believes that promoting education, along with training and supervision of dogs, licensing, and imposing civil and criminal liability on negligent and reckless owners, constitutes a more compassionate, efficient, and effective means of animal control than Breed Specific Legislation.

We adopt this position today, October 24, 2013, and declare it to be in accordance with the Sonoma Humane Society mission statement: *Ensuring every animal receives protection, compassion, love and care.*



**Evelyn Mitchell, President
Sonoma Humane Society Board of Directors**

² American Humane Association, CDC, American Veterinary Medical Association, The National Canine Research Council