

History

- Animal Control Code 3-185.01, the “breed ban” became law on February 2, 1997. It defined “pit bull” as American Staffordshire Terriers, American Pit Bull Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, mixes thereof, or any dog ever identified as a “pit bull” as illegal without annual registration and subject to certain restrictions. Registrations of new dogs entering the county ceased on or about 2003.

Cost/Budget

- The county’s 2003 “Vicious Animal Task Force” estimated the cost to confiscate, maintain, and dispose of a “pit bull” is \$186 per dog per day. The county currently spends between **\$260,000 and \$500,000** every year on benign family pets.
- The ban diverts resources by forcing the county to deal with non-threatening dogs. ACOs spend an average of 2 hours a day on ban-related calls-for-service. It would be time better spent picking up dogs running loose, educating the public about proper pet care and containment, and responding to calls about problem dogs and dog owners.
- In many instances, the law requires police officers to be dispatched to ban-related animal control calls, even for benign pets; increasing the cost-to-enforce and unnecessarily diverting law enforcement resources.
- Repealing the ban would redirect scarce funds to improve more effective animal control programs.
- Dog shows once held in the county have moved to other counties, taking \$1.5 million in annual revenue with them.
- The ban was designed to “eliminate” banned dogs within 10 years, but animal control data indicate **NO meaningful decrease** in dog intake numbers.
- 700 impounded most recently.

Under and Overinclusive

- Breed-specific law (BSL) is both underinclusive and overreaching. It unnecessarily persecutes families with innocent dogs but fails to capture all dangerous dogs and reckless owners.
- Dogs subjectively -- often incorrectly -- lumped together and labeled “pit bulls” are a genetically diverse and expanding group of pure- and mixed-breed dogs with a variety of personalities, behaviors and characteristics. It is impossible to attribute breed traits to such a genetically incoherent array of dogs.

- There is no list of policies or distinguishing characteristics of “banned breeds” published by the county.
- The county rips benign pets from their families and kills them or gives them to other families elsewhere.

Impact on Public Safety

- Experts have demonstrated that breed **bans DO NOT** make communities safer.
- Laws that deem pets dangerous simply based on their physical appearance rather than behavior divert our finite and ever-shrinking fiscal and personnel resources away from dealing with truly problematic dogs -- actually **diminishing** our ability to respond to dogs of community concern!



- Prince George’s animal control law has been a model for the region, long before the ban. It was fully updated and strengthened again in 2002 – still the most comprehensive code in the region.
- If the breed ban was repealed today, all dog owners would STILL be held to the same standards of care, custody, and control of their dogs by the other animal control laws already on the books. We have nuisance laws, running at-large laws, dangerous dog laws, pet limit laws, leash laws, licensing laws, cruelty and neglect laws...there is **no transgression** a dog or owner can commit that is not covered by breed-neutral county law.



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