



Celebrating Animals | Confronting Cruelty

January 31, 2018

Dear Town Council Members:

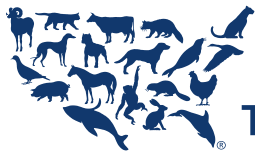
The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the nation's largest animal protection organization, understands what a large responsibility it is to create a safe community for residents and to uphold standards of conduct through the enforcement of laws. However, breed-specific legislation (BSL) is an ineffective animal management strategy that has failed everywhere it has been tried, and we strongly urge you to repeal your breed based ordinance provisions. Sound community management of dogs has nothing to do with breed, and Castle Rock will benefit from making this positive shift.

The HSUS wholeheartedly supports regulations for *all* dogs and their owners, including provisions for regulating dogs who have shown themselves to be dangerous, as a critical tool in creating safe and humane communities. However, using physical breed standards as a proxy for determining whether a dog is dangerous is incredibly flawed. With advances in science and our increasing knowledge about a dog's DNA and the relationship to appearance and behavior, we now know that breed is a complex issue that does not neatly translate into predictive behavior patterns. The physical appearance of a dog has no basis in determining whether a dog is likely to harm someone.

Twenty-one states and counting have taken a stand against BSL, including Colorado, and many municipalities are repealing their ordinances due to its lack of efficacy. Experts in policy-making recommend against using breed or any single-factor approach towards community animal management, and research has shown that while singling out a particular type of dog may give an illusion of protection, it is ineffective.

Instead, breed-neutral factors such as whether a dog is well socialized, altered, receiving veterinary care and other similar issues are significantly more predictive of the likelihood that a dog may be dangerous. To that end, we support an approach which ensures that dog owning residents are aware of standards and have access to the pet care services, information, and resources conducive to meeting them. We recommend breed-neutral laws which give enforcement agencies necessary powers to address dangerous incidents which have occurred, as well as policies and funding to support proactive community animal management to prevent future problems. Everyone wants to live in a safe community and we should do everything possible to prevent harmful dog-related incidents from occurring

The HSUS stands ready to assist legislators in strengthening Castle Rock's dangerous dog laws, while providing dog owners with due process and making it incumbent on owners to manage



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their dog's behavior to prevent injury or threat. We offer a wealth of information on dog behavior, dog management, and dog ownership. Our resources are free and we would welcome the opportunity to partner with the city. Please contact us if we can assist you in any way.

Respectfully,

Aubyn Royall

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