From: Jessi Harris
To: dencc - City Council
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Jan 22 Hearing re Proposed Bill Changing City"s Law Banning Pit Bulls
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2020 12:10:48 PM

I want to write to commend the Council on hearing Councilman Herndon's proposed bill changing the City of Denver's law banning pit bulls. This has been a long time controversy for the city of Denver and I would love to see a change in the administration of this matter and am grateful for District 8 and their desire to tackle this most important issue. I am hopeful this hearing will set the stage to further reconcile this matter and replace the cruel breed ban altogether with responsible dog ownership, regardless of breed.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my thoughts on Breed Specific Legislation. I will be sharing this with Denver Council Members individually as well as the communities their decisions effect.

In 2012, I moved to the city of Denver with my German Shorthaired Pointer puppy from Orange, California. Let me start by saying that I have spent my whole life growing up with friends and family with every breed of dog, mutt or otherwise, so I have a long history of personally knowing almost every breed or mix of breeds of dogs there are. One of the many reasons I chose to live in Denver is how dog friendly the city is. One of the first days in my new city, I took my dog to the dog park by my apartment and someone told me that I couldn't have my dog at any park in this city because of Breed Specific Legislation. I had never heard of this legislation and was immediately concerned with such legislation that would discriminate against the way a dog looks. Upon getting back to my house, I did some research. My AKC registered, breeder purchased dog that came with a birth certificate with a bloodline that went back at least 4 generations was apparently mistaken for a 'pit bull,' or a mix of one of the four breeds of dogs put under that breed umbrella consisting of the American Pit Bull Terrier, the American Staffordshire Terrier, the Staffordshire Bull Terrier, and the American Bully.

I am telling you this for two reasons. The first being that there is no reason to have any sort of bans based on breed. There is no one breed of dog inherently more risky than any other breed. This has been proven time and time again with behavior studies, genetic testing, and disposition studies. Every single breed, or domestic animal in general, needs to have responsible owners dedicated to training and proper care for their animals.

The second reason is that it is clear that these fellow dog owners, while well intended, misidentified my dog. Again, NO breed of dog is inherently more dangerous than any other. However, this point is being made because it is very easy to misidentify a "pit bull.' Especially because there is no such breed as a "pit bull," but rather any of the four breeds listed and any dog mixed with any of the four breeds listed exemplifying more than 51% DNA of those breeds. Many dogs look like many others. Especially since any more, many dogs are mixed with other dogs. It is simply impossible to visually tell in many and most cases what breed of dog we are talking about when trying to identify breed. The reason I am bringing this up is because when anything happens and there are reports about an attack or any other safety issues with a dog, the breed is usually brought up and it very likely that breed is misidentified. Again, NO breed of dog is inherently more dangerous than any other, however, this point only further illustrates the misinformation and the lack of actual protection of

safety and health of which Breed Specific Legislation simply is inadequate at providing. This mixed with the fact that Denver does their inspection of breed based on the visual assessment of each dog which is incredibly biased, a complete waste of money, and provides no actual benefit to anyone: officer, owner, public, or otherwise.

One final point I'd like to make is that I lived in Denver until 2017 when I finally moved to Arapahoe County because of the fact that Denver has Breed Specific Legislation. I have decided that I never want to live in a place that is so backwards that they believe any one breed is more inherently risky than any other and that thinks breed specific legislation is going to keep me safe over legislation that promotes responsible ownership of any dog, regardless of breed. Now my boyfriend and I live and have paid $62,640 in rent to my landlord in Arapahoe County in the last three years. We have bought at least $15,000 worth of groceries and supplies in Arapahoe County in the last three years. I have eaten out and supported the local business community in which I live in Arapahoe County, probably giving the city of Englewood and its surrounding county of Arapahoe at least $100,000 in revenue overall due 100% to the fact that I will not live in a place that does not understand that a dog needs responsible owners, regardless of breed. That is approximately $100,000 of revenue that the city and county of Denver could have received - just in the last three years - and I know that I am not alone. This lack of understanding and discrimination in general is appalling and made me feel unsafe. I hope that Denver decides to lift this cruel and unjust ban and instead focus on responsible ownership and legislation that works for surrounding communities and states and countries all over the world. My lease in Arapahoe County is up in May of 2020. If Denver lifts this ban, I would consider moving back to the city I moved across the country to live in. I truly loved living in Denver, however, I am grateful to have the opportunity to never again live in a place that doesn't understand the basic needs that is required of the health and safety of its people and breed specific legislation simply is not that - responsible dog ownership is.

I do hope this bill will pave the way to future discussion on not only registering 'pit bull' type dogs, but replacing the ban altogether with legislation focusing on responsible dog ownership, regardless of breed.

Best always,

Jessi Harris