From: Ashley Anaya
To: dencc - City Council
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Overturn Mayor Handcock's Veto: REPLACE DENVER BSL Letter of Support
Date: Sunday, February 23, 2020 11:14:18 AM

TO: Denver City Council

FROM: Ashley Anaya, Denver Community Member

DATE: February 19, 2020

SUBJECT: PRO REPLACING DENVER BSL

I am writing to urge you to please show up for the upcoming vote to **overturn Mayor Handcock's veto**, as well as show your support to overturn the **outdated legislation that reinforces disinformation** on creating "safer" Denver communities with dogs. Legislation should emphasize the responsibility of the dog owner(s), rather than discriminate on a dog's breed. In fact, both local and national data illustrate significant inconsistencies when comparing the official labeling of breed temperament/personality vs national and local biting reports.

Breed Discrimination vs Racism: Blurred Lines

Socially and sometimes legally, Pit Bulls, Rottweilers and Dobermans are all often labeled as aggressive dogs, while Labrador Retriever Siberian Huskies, Boxers, and Border Collies are socially and legally claimed to be "friendly" "non-aggressive", "gentle" and "affectionate". However, when analyzing temperament and personality characteristics of dog breeds, the data is in direct contrast to biting report data both nationally and within the City of Denver (See table below).

Dog Breed	American Kennel Club Defined Breed Temperament/Personality Report	% of Bites in Denver 2019	2019 Ranking of Number of Dog Bites in Denver
Labrador Retriever	"eager to please and non-aggressive towards man or animal."... "gentle ways"	10%	#1
German Shepherd	**Nothing** listed about being "friendly", "good natured", "gentle or "affectionate". Instead, it explicitly states ."Any dog that attempts to **bite** the judge must be disqualified." This is not noted in other dog breed reports.	9%	#2
"Unknown" mixed breed	N/A	8%	#3

American Pit Bull	"friendly attitude"	7%	#4
Pit Bull (under legislation includes **American Staffordshire Bull Terrier**(ASBT), **Staffordshire Bull Terrier** (SBT) and **American Pit Bull Terrier**(APBT))	**ASBT**= "confident, good-natured companions...trustworthy friend" **SBT**= "affection for its friends, and **children in particular**" **APBT**= Not listed on AKC breeds.	7%	#5
Siberian Husky	"friendly and gentle"	4%	#7
Border Collie	"affectionate"	3%	#9
Boxer	"playful, yet patient and stoical with children"	2%	#10

Table 1: Comparing 2019 Denver Dog Bite Data from The Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE) vs the American Kennel Club Breed Standard Personality Traits (hyperlinks)

In Denver, Labrador Retrievers are the most reported breed for biting, while nationally the "unknown" breed is cited as #1 for breed biting. In addition, the breed temperament/personality report from American Kennel Club cites Labrador Retrievers as "non-aggressive" and "gentle", yet the 2019 Denver Biting report shows this breed as #1 for the most reported bites. Therefore, the **current Breed Ban legislation reinforces the narrative that pit bulls and bully breeds are "dangerous", while pushing a false narrative around Labrador Retrievers and German Shepherds** maintain their "safe" and "family friendly" status despite biting and breed temperament reports.

How is this breed banning legislation any different from the way we view people? **Is it acceptable to say a specific ethnicity of people is more dangerous than others because of their skin color, physical traits or socioeconomic status? No.** Breed temperament and physical traits provide inconsistent data on predicting a dog's behavior. Moreover, it often does not discuss how restricted breed legislation influences a dog's behavior, as owners cannot legally apply for a dog license, are often scared to enroll in training or vet care. These fears by owners lead to creating a less safe Denver community because people are in fear that their dog companion will be taken away from them, euthanized and that they will have to pay fines or legal fees just for having a "banned" breed. Instead, **let us be more forward with acknowledging that all breeds exist in Denver, and that we should have policies that place accountability on the owner(s) and home environment.**

Recommendations

Pit bull breeds have always lived in the shadows of Denver communities. Instead of punishing a dog for the breed it was born with, let us move forward with a policy that will allow pit bulls to be licensed, not be legally discriminated against and empower owners to take appropriate care and training of their dog within their family. Getting rid of the nonsensical policy will

allow people to feel more comfortable taking their pets to vets, dog training, licensing their dog and making sure their dog is trained to interact with the public and other dogs that will not negatively impact the Denver community. The new guidelines and legislation associated with repealing the breed specific ban reinforce the owner responsibility narrative, which is much more effective in creating a safer and welcoming Denver community.

--
Thank you,

Ashley Anaya | 720-417-867