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Subject: [EXTERNAL] A new perspective on Ordinance 8-67: The "pit bull ban"
Date: Wednesday, February 19, 2020 3:03:20 PM

Good afternoon,

If you voted to keep the pit bull ban in place, please allow me to share just one, unique piece of information you should be privy to before making a final vote this Monday, 24 February. I used to work at Denver Animal Shelter (the entity that enforces the 'pit bull ban') for over 2 years and have seen **how much resources are wasted on this issue in the City of Denver**. I saw first-hand workers at the shelter allowing what you might call "pit bulls" return to their owners or be adopted as a "lab mix" or a "boxer mix" because it is a waste of City resources and it is a draconian policy.

If you do not know who determines if a dog is a "pit bull" in Denver or how much resources are consumed on this process: It is determined by Animal Protection Officers (APO) at the Denver Animal Shelter. These individuals, although fantastic at their jobs, **do not have any special certification or training to declare dog breeds**. They are no better or worse than any other experts in dog care fields guessing a breed based on physical characteristics (including dog show judges and veterinarians). On any given day, 3 APOs are selected to do a "breed evaluation" on a dog in question using a paper survey that they indicate what the animal's head, tail, eye shape, ears, body size, etc. look like and independently declare a breed for that dog. **If all 3 agree that based on general physical characteristics a dog looks like a "pit bull", that animal is declared a pit bull and the owner is notified- the dog is banned in Denver. If one of those APOs, for whatever reason(s), declare a different breed, that will be the official breed for that animal indefinitely in Denver.** You could see a dog in Denver that to 9 people out of 10 would think is a "pit bull", but on the dog's breed evaluation could be "boxer" or "basset hound" or "whippet"- no exaggeration, I have seen this on actual breed evaluations.

Each officer and staff member involved in this process take at least 20 minutes for their part of the breed evaluation (collectively, an hour or more per dog evaluation), and even longer if it is declared a pit bull. That time, money, and manpower could be used to do something productive, like investigate animal cruelty cases, investigate bites, or **educate the public on why they should obtain pet licenses and increase that "less than 20% compliance rate" the Mayor was referring to**. Regardless of your stance on the breed ban, you have to agree that this is not a perfect system and, to borrow Mayor Hancock's own words: **raises significant questions about the effectiveness of this current system**.

We are paying unqualified, imperfect animal lovers to spend portions of their day rating a dog's physical appearance and guess that dog's heritage, based on general physical characteristics, to determine if the dog falls in to a category that doesn't technically exist. And for what- the guise of "public safety"? I am sure you have been inundated with all the statistics showing pit bulls were less likely to have bitten someone compared to Labradors, German Shepherds, American bulldogs, et al., and those bites were equally or less serious in nature. Evidence shows that breed bans do not work in that regard.

Finally, the **pet licensing system used at the Denver Animal Shelter is costing the city money, is ineffective at outreach programs to educate the public on the importance of licensing, and is being outsourced to a for-profit company in Texas** that charges a substantial amount of money and offers Denver no support on licensing pets or returning lost pets to owners. No wonder Denver has not exceeded this "20% compliancy rate". **Repealing this ban could free up resources to get pet license compliance up to an acceptable rate.**

If you feel, armed with all the information citizens have given you regarding sound, legitimate, statistical rationale, that you would still want to keep the ban in place due to other concerned citizen's fears and confirmation biases, I ask that you at least consider the **amount of money that the City of Denver is wasting** and acknowledge Denver has not accomplished a decrease in dog bites or attacks since this ban. Please vote to **repeal this ban and free up resources better served elsewhere in Animal and Community Protection**.

Thank you for your time,

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