

Dog Breed Discrimination

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AGRI 2360 Animals & Society

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April 1, 2014

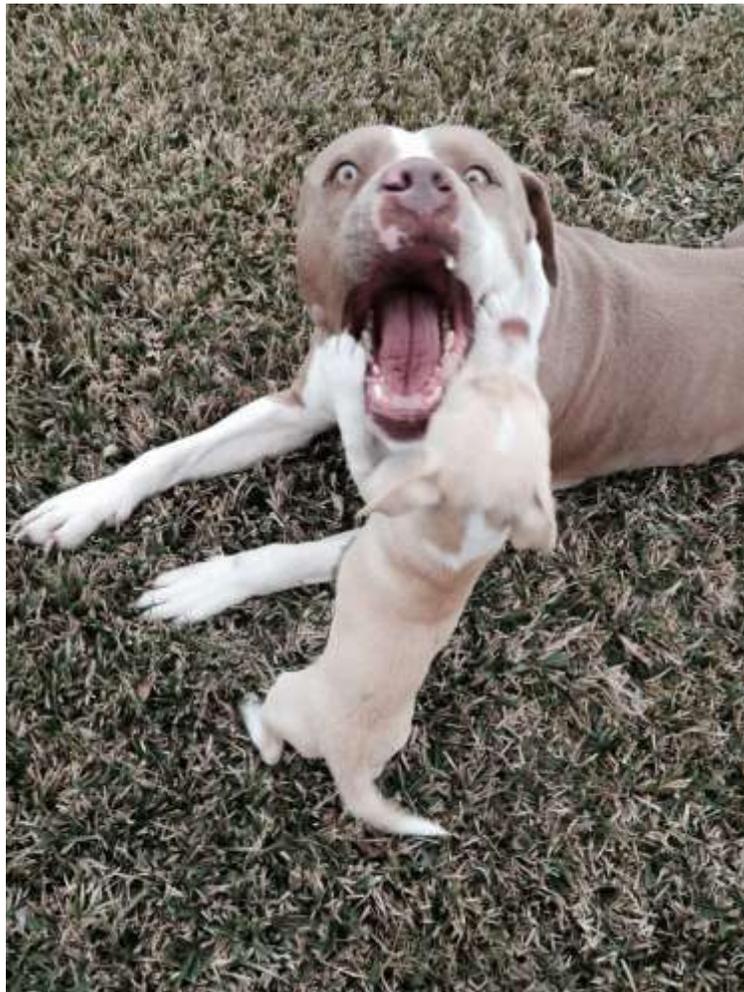


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Literature Review

Dog breed discrimination has not only occurred in recent years, but it has happened in the past (McKenna, 4). The first breed to be named as “bad breed” was the Doberman pinscher. This happened in the 1960s and 80s, in the 70s it was the German shepherd, the 90s it was the Rottweiler, and since about 2000 the Pit Bull has been the one talked about the most (McKenna, 4). Dogs have been known as man’s best friend, but in recent year’s different dog breeds have been talked about being too aggressive. People are discriminating the dog breeds by just looking at them and not giving them a chance of showing their true personalities. “There is no such thing as a vicious breed of dogs and a dog's behavior has absolutely nothing to do with its appearance” (McKenna, 5). Insurance companies are the ones that discriminated dog breeds the most, some have even turned down the people because they had a “bad breed” (Frank and Carlisle-Frank, 3). What many people don’t understand is that every breed of dog can be able to bite for whatever reason possible, but it’s the owners fault for a dog being aggressive toward other dogs or humans (McKenna, 5). When people see an aggressive dog, they judge the dog right away and label the whole breed “bad”. What they don’t take into account is that the owner gave the dog its aggressive behavior. Breed discrimination laws in the past have not been very effective, “in the late 1980’s a ban on Pit Bulls was passed in Miami-Dane County, but as of 2002 an estimate of 50,000 Pit Bulls were still living in that area” (McKenna, 6). It’s better not to have these kinds of laws because there are people out there that love these types of dogs, even if the laws are passed some people will still attempt to get the dog illegally. So instead of trying to ban the so called “bad breeds” the government should attempt to help them more. Figure 1 is a perfect example of who need to be blamed.



Figure 1. Humans do everything to these so-called “bad breed” and when random people see these dog they become afraid of them. People should be the ones to blame, just like how you teach your dog new trick they teach them how to be aggressive (Vickery).

The Pit Bull breed is the most discriminated breed in current years, since the 1980s it had some highly aggressive cases of people being bit and some of them being killed (Cunningham, 3). It was still not the most discriminated breed until the 2000s. This means that people started to find out more about these few cases were people ended up badly injured and immediately went to judge the whole breed (McKenna, 4). With these attacks the Breed-Specific Legislation began to be talked about, with many people wanting to ban specific breeds (Cunningham, 3). Scientist have even tried to get an accurate count of the types of dogs that bite the most and the number of bites reported per year, but they still can't seem to find the right answers (Cunningham, 7). Without any accurate statistics how can people be sure that one breed of dog is more likely to bite than another. Most people that are not well familiarized with the dog cannot distinguish one dog from another. All people do is look at their outer frame and put it in the most known categories.

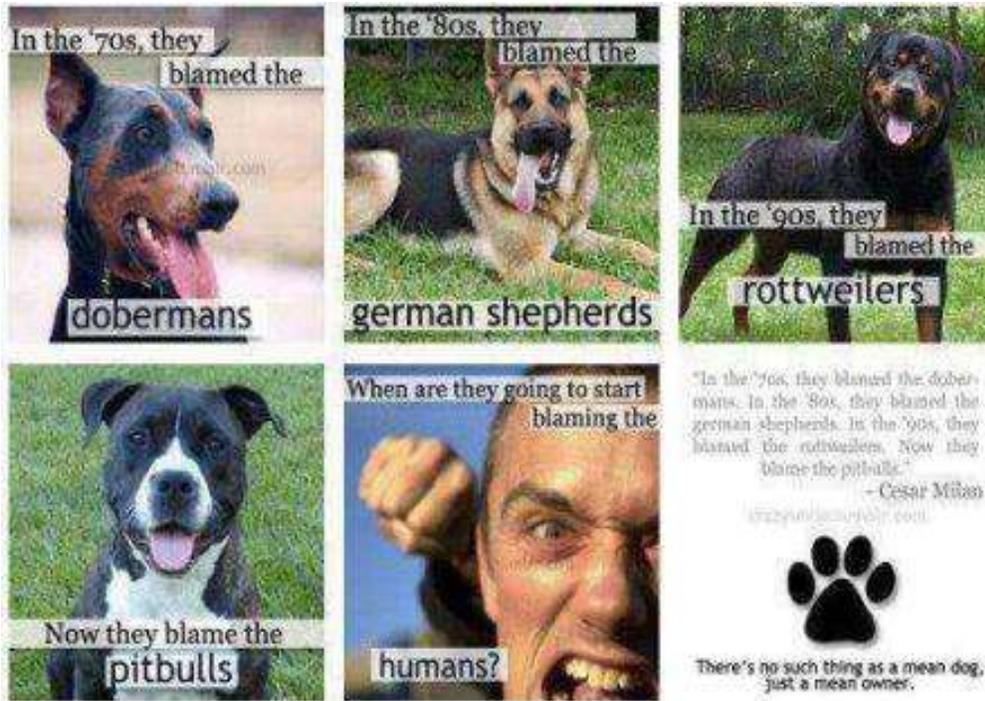


Figure 2. Every decade it's a different breed that gets blamed for being aggressive, but the only one to blame is around them every day.

Organizations and/or Agencies

Organizations like veterinary and breed registry are fighting against breed discrimination, these might not be well known organizations, but they hope to stop breed discrimination (Cunningham, 2). People can find out more of these in or around their town, and they are easy to contact in case help is needed.

The Canine Good Citizen program has been around for a while; its main focus since it was established was to try and get all the dogs to be treated equally, by showing them the same love that the smaller less feared dogs (Carpenter). Also since the Canine Good Citizen program began in 1989, they established a method of getting to know the manners of the dogs (American Kennel Club). The process involves going through a ten step test and once a dog passes it will be rewarded, this will show you how good dogs can be and why they shouldn't be discriminated (American Kennel Club).

Another organization that is willing to help Pit Bulls that are in need is the Villalobos Rescue Shelter; they also have their own show called Pit Bulls and Parolees. Their main objective of this shelter is to take in dogs and give them a second opportunity in life, they are medically treated and some get sprayed or neutered (Villalobos Rescue Shelter). Many of the people that don't want their dog either leave it in their front gates or loose in the streets knowing the shelter will take them in. The reason they have the TV show is to let people know that these animals are good and in need of a home (Villalobos Rescue Shelter). A few facts about this shelter are that daily about an average of 150 dogs are brought in, and about 5 dogs are adopted in one month, and it takes an average of about 1000 dollars daily to run this program (Villalobos Rescue Shelter). This is a good example of an organization that is willing to do everything they can to help dogs in need; they even use up a lot of money to treat each dog. Once the dogs are fully healthy they are put up for adoption and find the best family fit for them. Figure 3 is one of the organizations that is willing to help dogs and even put them through a test.



Figure 3. The Canine Good Citizen program puts dog through a test to see if they are good around people and other dogs, the good thing about this program is that people everywhere can see how good most of the dogs are (Babcock).

There are many more organizations that do not support breed discrimination laws. The first one is The American Kennel Club, they support some laws about determining which dogs are dangerous, but at the same time believe that it's the owners that are responsible and they should receive the consequences (Animal Farm Foundation). Another one is The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, they also support laws that determine what should be done

to the dogs that are a danger to the public, but they are against the banning of specific breeds (Animal Farm Foundation). Also the Best Friend Animal Society is another one that does not support selective breed laws, they believe that it will cost a lot of money and it will still improve safety (Animal Farm Foundation). These were a few well know organizations, but there are many smaller one that are opposed to these laws. I think that it's good that there are organizations out there that are willing to help people that need help with their pets and support them. Most people can find out more about these organizations by going on their websites, once in their website everything is explained in more detail and their contact information is available. Some of them even have advertisements on TV to let people everywhere know that they are there to help.

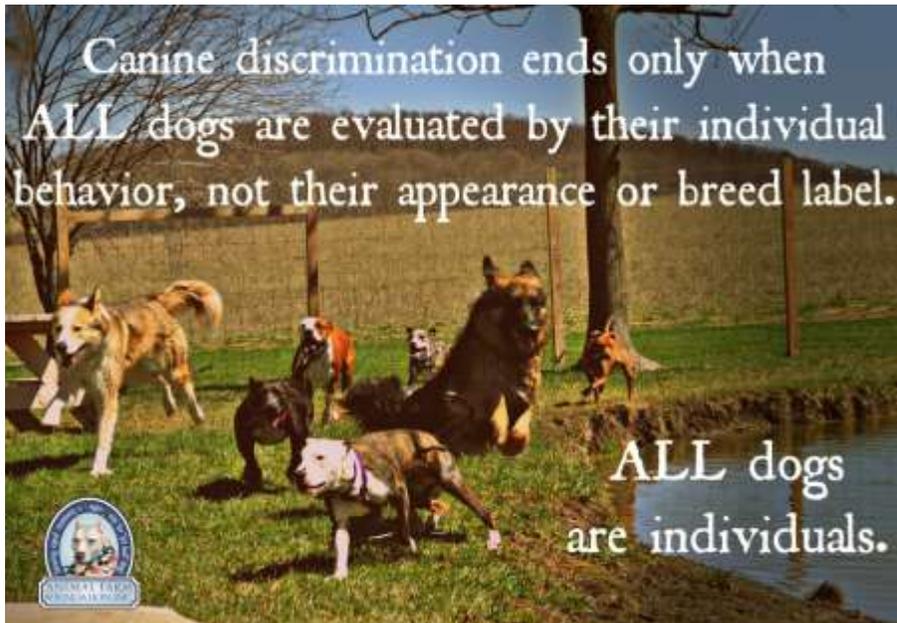


Figure 4. Shows that all dogs should be judged by their individual actions not by how dogs in their breeds act (American Farm Foundation).

Animals in the News

Dogs are often in the news mainly because they bit somebody, but the one that catches people's attention the most are the bigger more bulky dogs. A Pit Bull named Elle made it on "The Today Show", she helps children feel more comfortable; one day she was attacked by other dogs and she didn't try to fight back, but she is still known as a "bad dog" because of the breed (Greenwood). By one of these dogs making it on a televised show, it's going to show people that Pit Bulls, or any other type of discriminated dog, are not as bad as people assume they are, they can even be helpful in many different ways. A family in California chose to stay in their car because everywhere they went to find a home they didn't allow them to stay there because of the Pit Bull they had with them (Greenwood). This family chose to give up a home for their Pit Bull because to them this dog was part of their family. Just like the family from the previous case, a lady was threatened to lose her home owners insurance if she did not get rid of her Pit Bull, "Bully breed". In reaction to her threat, she decided to give her dog to someone who claimed her on Craigslist. Come to find out, a 32-year-old man, who had claimed the dog, tortured the dog because of its breed and the label they receive (Keisel, 1). In this case, a woman didn't want to lose her insurance so she gave up her dog, but instead of giving it to someone she really trusted she put it on the Internet. The woman gave up probably her best friend to some stranger that didn't treat the dog properly. The main thing is if you are trying to give up your dog find a family that will take care of it; get to know them a little to see if it's a proper environment for the animal. In figure 5, most "bad breeds" go through people not wanting them, thinking they are bad, and even taking them away from their homes (Berry).



Figure 5. If people saw the good side of these animals, not many of them would have to go through this and finally live a happy life (Berry).

Dogs back then were used to help humans in many different things, but as time passed by they became family members while others are used to assist people that have disabilities, also some physicians say the dog are good for human health (Cunningham, 17). That's why one family did not want to give up their dog just for a home, because to them he is part of the family. While in the other hand, the women didn't want to lose her insurance so instead of just letting the dog lose she chose to give it to somebody she thought was good, but ended up being the opposite.

I personally own a Pit Bull, he is the nicest dog around my family and I, at times he might bark when he sees car pass by but around random people he tries to have fun and play around with them. Many people go to my parents' house and all he does is try to lick them and play around, his never bitten anyone and most of the time he plays around with our other little dogs. People just need to understand that only a few dogs are dangerous, but not the whole breeds. If they understood this I believe that they would even chose to get the one of these animals. When I first got my dog my parents were not too happy about it because they believed that they were a "bad breed", but now they really like my Pit Bull.

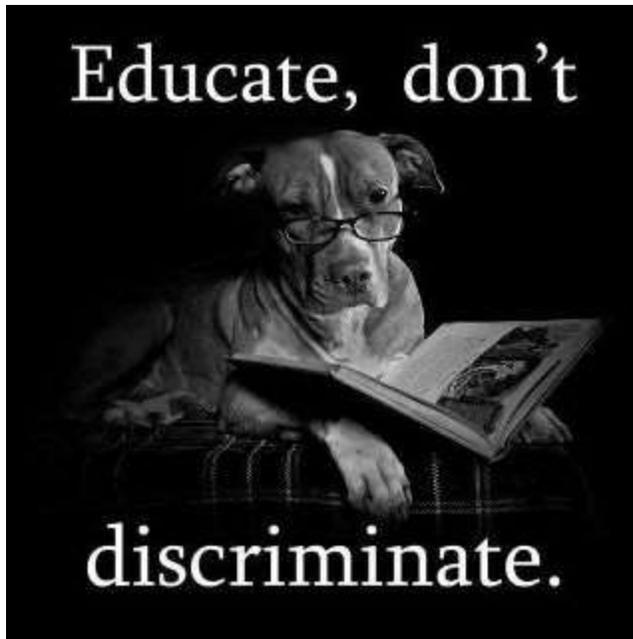


Figure 6. People should be educated about dogs and have all the fact straight so they do not judge them automatically. Maybe then discrimination will be stopped (Aleks).

Animal Law

State and local government are talking about passing a law known as the “breed discrimination law”, which tells people that own dogs that they can only have some types of dog breeds (McKenna, 4). A law like this had been passed in Oklahoma that demanded specific breeds, but the state senate introduced the bill SB 362 which prohibited the laws discriminating dog breed to be passed in some counties (McKenna, 4). This bill did not make it far; it was turned down (McKenna, 4). A law that was put forward in 1996 was the Pennsylvania Dog Law, which describes in detail that specific breeds cannot be chosen (Carpenter). Even with this law passed many insurance companies, which are the ones that discriminate dogs the most, were not aware of what was going on and still discriminated the dogs (Carpenter). Even President Obama supports the idea the pet owners should be allowed to choose between whichever dog breed they want, his family even brought dog to the white house (Melella). More than 30,000 people signed a petition to the white house asking for laws that prohibit dog breed discrimination, the White

House response to this was “Breed-Specification is a Bad Idea”, which shows government people are against dog discrimination (Melella). Laws have been passed in many different states about banning certain types of dog breeds and other states have passed laws against breed discrimination, but nobody will really follow these laws they chose to ignore them and continue doing what they keep doing. With the president against dog breed discrimination, maybe a law can be passed and be enforced if not followed. Figure 7 shows how dog need help to get their voices heard (Greenwood).



Figure 7. This picture shows a dog in front of The White House trying to get the president's attention, since the president is against breed discrimination laws.

One of the most talked about laws that people want to see passed is the “breed specific legislation”. Because of the amount of attack and injuries that the “bad breeds” have caused in the past and present many people believe that some breeds should be banned, that’s why they want the BSL to pass (Cunningham, 3). Ohio is one of those states that has a law that bans a specific breed, in their case if anybody has a Pit Bull of any kind the dog should be tied up when on their property, if they are out of the property they should be caged (Cunningham, 4). While other states like Florida and Minnesota are against the BSL (Cunningham, 4). The case American Dog Owners Association, Inc. vs. City of Lynn, where Lynn tried to regulate Pit Bulls, but the Supreme Court found the case to be unconstitutional (Cunningham, 4). I believe that they should attempt to stop dog fighting more instead of trying to ban the dogs, with no more dog fighting people will stop training their dogs to be aggressive and with this the less amount of dog

attacks will happen. With people like the president against the BSL it should be easier to stop these kinds of laws to be passed because he has one of the biggest voices in the U.S.



Figure 8. Don't judge the dogs first, get to know them a little bit then make your decision about them (Real dogs real people).

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