



Breed Specific Legislation

The International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC) is an organization dedicated to raising the standards of evidence-based animal training and behavior consulting through education and certification.

The IAABC strongly opposes any legislation specifically designed to target or discriminate against dogs based solely on their breed or appearance. Research clearly shows that humans are poor at determining a dog's breed based on appearance.* Further, there is a lot of within-breed genetic variation that suggests breed or the appearance of a breed are both bad targets for legislative action.

Dogs can become dangerous as a result of inadequate socialization, inappropriate training, poor living conditions, poor breeding, and other factors having nothing to do with their specific breed. With the right environment, training, and care, dogs of all breeds can become equally well-adjusted family members and working partners.

The IAABC believes that the objectives behind breed specific legislation can be met more effectively through proper training and care, rigorous enforcement and, where necessary, the strengthening of existing laws.

Where such laws are enacted, provisions must be put in place to exempt existing individual dogs from euthanasia. These provisions, when necessary, should include obedience training provided by an appropriately certified, positive reinforcement-based professional trainer.

We fully understand and support the need for laws to protect humans and animals from the tragic consequences of dog attacks. In order to effectively do so, however, legislation should be based on specific behaviors or actions, and should not discriminate based on breed or appearance.

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- *See MuttMix.org if you'd like to test your skills, an IAABC Citizen Science project done in conjunction with University of Massachusetts Medical School, and the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard.*