

Letter of Support from Banned Aid Coalition 2019

We are the advocacy coalition, Banned Aid, and would like to offer our full support for the upcoming Bill to repeal the breed specific portion of the Dog Owners Liability Act. It is hard to believe that BSL has been in place in Ontario since 2005, although to many of us it seems like yesterday. We remember how shocked and dismayed we were by the hasty and politically motivated zeal of then Attorney General, Michael Bryant, to ban all “pit bulls” in Ontario.

We also fully support and applaud the addition of increased penalties on a sliding scale for repeat offenders.

We believe all dog owners deserve fair and equal treatment under the law. Responsibility for any dog must be firmly placed on the dog owner. Dog owners of ALL dogs must be held accountable for the actions of their animal.

There is no evidence to support any dog is dangerous based on breed, breed mixture or appearance.

We want to see an increase in public safety overall. By removing the breed specific language and applying the law equally across the board, this takes a giant step in the right direction.

The only way to effectively increase public safety is to clearly set the standard of what is expected of dog owners. If dog owners do not comply, the law must be enforced. Enforcement is key.

Improving DOLA will allow an easier approach for municipalities to provide resources for dog owners to meet the community standard. Enforcement of licensing will be easier when dog owners feel secure their dog will not be taken or killed based on its appearance, community actions such as access to training and positive activities. Dog bite prevention programs for children are extremely beneficial. Providing safe places for people to socialize and exercise their dogs is also important.

Tracking dog bites without labeling of breed or breed mixture but accounting by severity is helpful to track success.

*Banned Aid was formed in September 2004, immediately after the introduction of Bill 132 *Public Safety related to Dogs Statute Amendment Act* in the Ontario Legislature (38th Parliament, 1st session), a coalition of purebred breed and advocacy groups formed quickly as **Banned Aid**, with the aim of providing full information and research about so-called “pit bull type dogs” and BSL. Banned Aid Coalition 2019 consists of and has expanded to include the following groups:

1. American Staffordshire Terrier Club of Canada (ASTCC)
2. Staffordshire Bull Terrier Club of Canada (SBTCC)
3. Golden Horseshoe American Pit Bull Terrier Club (GHAPBTC)
4. Dog Legislation Council of Canada (DLCC)
5. Advocates for the Underdog (AFTU)
6. Ontario "Pit Bull" Co-op
7. ANML-RESQ Network of Ontario

The breed clubs in the coalition were very active in lobbying against BSL not only for their own breeds, but on behalf of all "pit bulls." They have continued to do so whenever possible in recent years. The Dog Legislation Council of Canada's members were and are very active in the research of existing worldwide BSL, analysis as to its effect, and the development of effective non-breed specific dangerous dog legislation. The Ontario "Pit Bull" Co-op is a support network for families impacted by BSL. Advocates for the Underdog and ANML-RESQ Network of Ontario were active in lobbying against the legislation and rescuing/rehoming dogs targeted by the law.

Together, the groups are a united force against breed specific legislation.

Banned Aid Coalition 2019 is pleased to see a move to restore fair and equal treatment to all dog owners in Ontario.

Respectfully,

On Behalf of Banned Aid Coalition 2019

Lori Gray