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Don't Bully My Bully!

Three years ago, my husband and I went to the shelter to adopt a dog. We instantly fell in love with one particular dog, and brought him home with us. Our intentions were to give him a better life, but we had no idea how much he would change our lives. We didn't just become dog owners, we became pit bull owners. Many people were quick to judge me, my husband, and our beloved pet. However, the hatred did not end there. While searching the web to find supportive sites for pit bull owners, I made a disturbing discovery. Several politicians, and a few organizations, are creating and supporting laws to ban pit bulls, and pit bull types. These laws are called Breed-specific legislation, and I do not support them.

Breed-specific legislation, more commonly known as BSL, is a law or ordinance which only pertains to a specific breed of dog, usually to prevent dog attacks on humans. These laws do not affect any other breeds, and are commonly used in the United States to restrict or prohibit ownership of pit bulls and pit bull type dogs. However, there is no clear definition on what a pit bull actually is. The term "pit bull" is commonly used to describe breeds such as American Pit Bull Terriers, American Staffordshire Terriers, and Staffordshire Bull Terriers. These particular breeds are also referred to as "bully breeds" due to their historical uses in bull baiting. Other "bully breeds" includes American Bulldogs, Bull Terriers, Boxers, and English Bulldogs which are also sometimes mistaken as pit bulls and discriminated against. BSL is also costly, ineffective, and creates new burdens for animal control agencies.

Furthermore, I consider BSL to be a huge discrimination against bully breeds and their owners. For example, when referring to pit bull owners, City Councilman Bob Fitzgerald states "We don't want "those people" here". (Thomas 1) Councilman Jack Hilbert also stereotypes these dogs. He made the following comments: "This is not a normal canine animal," and "A pit bull bite is unique - it's a grip and hold and doesn't release," (Parker 1) Comments like these give all pit bulls and their owners a bad reputation. However, not all pit bull owners are gang members, drug dealers, criminals, or thugs. Since I have been a pit bull owner, I have had the pleasure of meeting many other pit bull owners and none of us fall into the categories listed. It is also unfair to assume that all pit bulls are bad, because with proper care and training, the majority of pit bulls can be a wonderful family pet. Pit bulls are also used for many other purposes such as therapy dogs, search and rescue, and police dogs.

Of course, there are some people who are in favor of BSL. PETA alleged main reason for supporting these laws is to end the suffering and cruelty pit bulls endure. PETA claims to be against animal cruelty, and dog fighting, and abuse. However, even PETA is quick to stereotype when it comes to pit bulls and their owners. According to an article on [PETA](#) online:

Are some pit bulls loving companions? Absolutely. But it is important to bear in mind that nice families rarely come to a shelter seeking pit bulls. The vast majority of people who want pit bulls are attracted to the "macho" image of the breed as a living weapon and seek to play up this image by putting the animals in heavy chains; kicking, beating, and otherwise abusing them into aggression; and leaving them outside in all weather extremes in order to "toughen" them up.

I could not find any evidence or statistics to support this outrageous statement.

Unfortunately it is statements like these that persuade people to support such unfair

laws. And with politicians joining in to support BSL, these poor dog's days are numbered. In 2007, Senator Sharpe James of New Jersey introduced an Act that would place restrictions on pit bulls. (Thomas 1) Fortunately, that law was not passed.

As a pit bull owner, I stand up against BSL, and urge everyone I know to do the same. When voting, it is important for me to know where a politician stands on BSL and I will not vote for anyone that supports these laws. Instead of labeling and banning a type of dog, there are other options. Better leash laws, ending dog fighting, and harsher penalties for irresponsible owners and animal abusers are all good ways to prevent dog attacks. Even after realizing how tough it is to be a pit bull owner, my husband and I made the decision to adopt a second pit bull. Both of our pit bulls are neutered, trained, and loved, and I could not imagine life in my house without them. Finally, I will not look the other way while Breed-specific laws are passed. Instead, I choose to stand up and fight, and hope other people will do the same.

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