

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY SERVICES (CYF)

Resolution CYF-22-23

RESTRICTING CERTAIN DOG BREEDS

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) is committed to equal treatment and opportunity for the African American in the United States;

WHEREAS, 69 million American households own at least one dog;

WHEREAS, breed specific legislation refers to laws and/or policies that selectively apply to one or more dog breeds or dog breed mixes, often based on their appearance;

WHEREAS, cities, counties, and other government or quasi-government entities and/or agencies across the United States have enacted and enforce breed specific legislation;

WHEREAS, breed specific legislation ranges in impact and can include requirements such as mandatory sterilization, increased liability insurance, mandatory muzzling, registration requirements, or outright bans on the ownership or possession of the specific breed/breed mix;

WHEREAS, pit bull terrier-type dogs are the most frequent subject of breed specific legislation;

WHEREAS, breed specific legislation is not based on science or data but is based upon outdated stereotypes and conjecture;

WHEREAS, Americans often associate pit bull terrier-type dogs with people of color, specifically young, Black men;

WHEREAS, breed specific legislation negatively and disproportionately affects people and communities of color;

WHEREAS, because pit bull terrier-type dogs are typically associated with young, Black men and because breed specific legislation typically targets pit bull terrier type dogs, breed specific legislation disproportionately affects African Americans;

WHEREAS, there are a wide variety of laws that foster safe dog ownership for the owner and the dog regardless of the various dog breeds;

WHEREAS, more Black people live below the poverty line than white people; and

WHEREAS, people living below the poverty line are less able to pay criminal penalties and to comply with superfluous requirements to own a breed subject to breed specific legislation.

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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) denounces breed specific legislation, including breed specific policies, which apply to specific dog breed or dog breed mixes and believes that such laws are discriminatory in nature;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL calls for all states, local governments, government agencies, and/or quasi-governmental entities to repeal any and all breed specific legislation or policies;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL supports safe pet ownership and responsible regulation to protect both pets and members of the community, as long as such regulation is not discriminatory against certain breeds;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL calls for all states to enact laws preempting local government, government agencies, and/or quasi-governmental entities from enacting breed specific legislation;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

SPONSOR: Representative Karen Camper (TN)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Children, Youth, and Family Services (CYF) Policy Committee

Ratified in Plenary Session: December 2, 2021

Ratification certified by: Representative Billy Mitchell (GA), NBCSL President