

California Bill Allows Dog Breed-Specific Regulations

A California bill signed into law Friday allows the state's cities and counties to regulate dogs by breed.

October 10, 2005

A California bill signed into law Friday allows the states cities and counties to regulate dogs by breed, permitting local governments to create breed-specific sterilization programs and breeding requirements. It does not allow local ordinances to declare a specific breed dangerous or vicious.

Under the law, which goes into effect January 1, 2006, if a city or county implements a program or breeding requirement, it must provide the states public health veterinarian with quarterly statistical reports on dog bites.

According to the bills text, the intent of the law is to curb uncontrolled and irresponsible breeding of animals, which leads to defective animals that present a public safety risk.

The bills comment section contained information from a dog-bite task force assembled by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom. The task force found that most dog bite incidents involve un-neutered makes over 50 pounds in weight, and that 60 percent of all dangerous dog hearing in the city involved pit bulls. The task force recommended that cities and counties be given the authority to regulate dogs by breed.

Yet national and local dog clubs say the bill is misguided.

Breed-specific laws are not the best way to protect communities, according to the American Kennel Club, because an owner intent on using a dog for malicious purposes could simply switch to a different breed.