

Spring 3-9-2019

Breed Specific Legislation: Are Breed Bans an Effective Tool in Preventing Dog Bites? A Case Study on the Town of Castle Rock, Colorado and their animal ordinance.

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Breed Specific Legislation: Are Breed Bans an Effective Tool in Preventing Dog Bites?

A Case Study on the Town of Castle Rock, Colorado and their animal ordinance.

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March 9, 2019

Breed Specific Legislation

Abstract

Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) is a law passed in certain states and municipal governments to address dog attacks by certain breeds. This law prohibits breeding and ownership of certain breeds that are considered “dangerous”. Restricted breeds that fall under BSL are Rottweilers, American Staffordshire Terriers, Pit Bull Terriers, Chow Chows, German Shepherds, and Doberman Pinschers. Due to BSL, dogs on the restricted breed list are unfairly judged based on breed and appearance, as opposed to behavior.

Breed bans are currently in effect in Denver, Colorado and other towns throughout the state, however, the Town of Castle Rock which is just south of Denver decided to make history and repeal their pit bull ban after 26 years of enforcement. Using a mixed method of qualitative data analysis with dog bite for the Town and quantitative data analysis with interviews and surveys taken by residents of Castle Rock and surrounding towns, I examined how the Town Council of Castle Rock came to vote to change their animal ordinance which included repealing their pit bull ban and adopting a two-tiered behavioral based dangerous dog or potentially dangerous dog ordinance.

Breed Specific Legislation

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Chapter 1 – Introduction.....	5
Background of the problem.....	5
Statement of the problem.....	7
Purpose and significance of the study and Main research question	8
Assumptions and Limitations.....	9
Expected Impact of the Research.....	9
Chapter 2 – Literature Review.....	10
Introduction.....	10
Literature Review.....	11
Any dog can bite.....	11
Ownership and Socialization.....	12
Constitutional Challenges.....	14
BSL violates ADA.....	15
Conclusion.....	16
Chapter 3 - Research Methodology.....	17
Introduction.....	17
Research Question.....	18
Dependent and Independent Variables.....	19
Population Sampling Strategy.....	19
Procedure.....	20

Breed Specific Legislation

Data Processing and Analysis.....	20
Internal and External Validity.....	21
Conclusion.....	22
Chapter 4 – Results and Analysis.....	23
Introduction.....	23
Overview of Methodology.....	23
Qualitative Data Results and Findings.....	23
Surveys	23
Interviews	29
Quantitative Data Results and Findings.....	30
Summary of Findings.....	33
Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Recommendations.....	35
References.....	39

Breed Specific Legislation

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Problem:

Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) is a law passed in certain states and municipal governments to address dog bites by certain breeds. This law prohibits breeding and ownership of certain breeds that are considered dangerous. Restricted breeds that fall under BSL are Rottweilers, American Staffordshire Terriers, Pit Bull Terriers, Chow Chows, German Shepherds, and Doberman Pinschers. In 2000, The United States Center for Disease control (CDC) conducted a study on dog bite related fatalities (DBRF) between 1979 and 1996 and found that over 300 fatalities caused by Rottweilers and pit-bull type dogs, meaning those breeds which have similar physical features with the Pit Bull Terrier and the American Staffordshire Terrier. However, the CDC also determined that while fatal attacks appear to be a breed-specific problem, other breeds that are not considered dangerous can also bite and cause fatalities at higher rates. Due to situations where the breed of a dog is indeterminable, enforcing breed specific laws are not practical and unconstitutional (Sacks, Sinclair, Gilchrist, Golab & Lockwood, 2000).

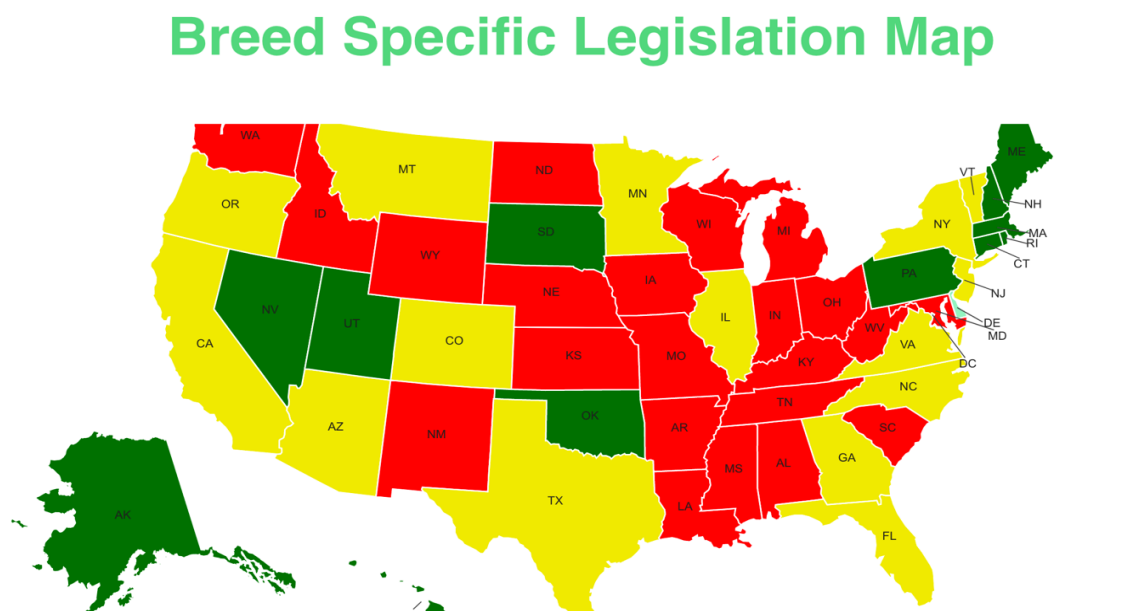
BSL targets specific breeds of dogs that are wrongly thought to be dangerous – most frequently pit-bull types – and places stricter regulations on these dogs or even makes ownership of them illegal. Several cities, towns, and states across the United States and Canada have adopted breed specifics measures in an attempt to prevent dog bites in their communities (AVMA, 2018).

In 1989, the city of Denver, Colorado passed an ordinance (Sec.8-55) that it is “unlawful for any person to own, possess, keep, exercise control over, maintain, harbor, transport, or sell within the city any pit bull. A pit bull is defined broadly as "any dog that is an American Pit Bull

Breed Specific Legislation

Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, or *any dog displaying the majority of physical traits* of any one (1) or more of the above breeds, or any dog exhibiting those distinguishing characteristics which substantially conform to the standards established by the American Kennel Club or United Kennel Club for any of the above breeds. "A person who applied for and received a special pit bull license before August 7, 1989 (date of the publication of the ordinance) and who maintains the pit bull in compliance with the requirements of the ordinance may keep a pit bull" (Michigan State University, 2012). Denver passed this legislation in response to two highly publicized pit bull attacks on a minister and a 3-year-old boy.

In 2004, the Colorado State legislature passed a statute prohibiting any legislation based on breed. This statute would've repealed all breed bans in the state, but due to home-rule municipality, meaning that cities, towns or municipalities have the ability to pass laws to govern themselves. Denver was able to get their pit bull ban reinstated, other towns with breed bans were also able to reinstate their breed ban laws.



Breed Specific Legislation

The above map shows BSL, state by state. The states shaded in green are those where is no BSL enforced. The states shaded in yellow show there is some level of BSL being enforced, but there are exceptions allowed due to being grandfathered or are part of a home-rule exemption due to the language of the legislation. The states shaded in red indicate that BSL is being enforced and there is no state or local level legislation that prohibits BSL. Colorado is in the yellow category due to the home-rule exception. BSL is not endorsed by the State of Colorado (C.R.S. § 18-9-204.5, et. seq.) but there 271 towns and cities in Colorado that enforce BSL.

Statement of the Problem:

The specific problem addressed was if Breed Specific Legislation, in particular breed bans, was an effective tool to prevent dog bites. “Regardless of the form, all breed-specific legislation shares the essential characteristics of singling out breeds in an attempt to protect society. There is no consideration given to the individuality of the dogs. Instead, any dog fitting a particular description is a considered a menace, even if that treatment is unwarranted and the individual animal poses no actual threat to the community. This type of legislation is based on the belief that dogs such as pit bulls possess inherent traits, like strength and aggression, which make all members of the group dangerous. Even if a particular animal has behaved as a model citizen, the potential for disaster is always just beneath the surface, and it is the potential danger that justifies the blanket prohibitions. However, these justifications are nothing more than a flagrantly mistaken stereotype of a misunderstood breed. Indeed, generalizations appear facially equivalent to violations of equal protection pertaining to humans” (Burstein, 2004).

Focusing on the state of Colorado where BSL is prohibited, the city of Denver and other cities and towns in Colorado still enforce BSL due to being home-rule municipalities, particularly breed bans, more specifically pit bull bans. This research project is single case study

Breed Specific Legislation

on the Town of Castle Rock, Colorado who repealed their ban on pit bulls in May 2018, after enforcing their ban since 1992. The Town of Castle Rock, 36 miles south of Denver was incorporated on April 14, 1881 and has a population of 62,271 as of 2017. The Town of Castle Rock Attorney's Office held an open house on April of 2017 for the residents of Castle Rock with a need to review the animal ordinance, which included the pit bull ban. The former animal ordinance with regards to breed specific legislation prior to May 1, 2018 was as stated:

“Prohibited dogs that displayed 50 percent or more distinguishing characteristics of the American Pit Bull Terrier, the American Staffordshire Terrier, and the Staffordshire Bull Terrier” (<https://www.crgov.com>).

Purpose and Significance of the Study and Main Research Question:

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Breed Specific Legislation, particularly breed bans, in preventing dog bites. Although there is research that does exist regarding this topic, this research project is a single case study on the Town of Castle Rock, Colorado and their Town Council's recent vote to update their animal ordinance that included repealing a pit bull ban that had been enforced for 26 years. The Town Council arrived to their vote after 2 open houses, 3 town council meetings, and a survey from residents and non-residents of the Town of Castle and a petition with 914 signatures in favor of ending BSL in Castle Rock.

Review of the data presented to the Town Council that led to their vote to update the Town of Castle Rock's animal ordinance addressed my main research question: Is Breed Specific Legislation, particularly breed specific bans, an effective tool for preventing dog bites?

Breed Specific Legislation

Assumptions and Limitations:

The purpose of this study required full review of data provided to me as a result of an interview with a Castle Rock resident who was instrumental in the campaign to end BSL in Castle Rock. The data consisted of all documents that were presented to the Town Council of Castle Rock on May 1, 2018 which included results from the animal ordinance survey, a petition with 914 signatures, dog bite data for the Town of Castle for year period 2011-2016 and dog bite data from several neighboring jurisdictions. Due to time constraints, only partial data was extracted and organized for this project. Qualitative data consisted of the animal ordinance survey results and the interview results with the Castle Rock resident and the Town Deputy City Attorney. Quantitative data consisted of dog bite data for the Town of Castle Rock for year period 2011-2016 provided by Castle Animal Control and dog bite data for neighboring municipality, the City of Centennial, a region with no breed ban, for year period 2010-2017.

With qualitative and quantitative data presented, it is assumed that the Town Council came to their vote after careful review and analysis of all data presented to them, and with the concerns of the citizens taken into consideration.

Expected Impact of the Research

As this research project is focused on a Town that made a change in their animal ordinance that resulted in a positive outcome, I expect an impact has already been made for all pit bull owners in the Town, as their dogs are now welcomed members of the community and a fair dangerous dog ordinance has been enacted. I am also hoping that other cities and towns in Colorado are may follow suit and adopt a similar ordinance so there is parity across the state of Colorado in regards to BSL.

Chapter 2: Literary Review

Introduction:

Since the 1980's, Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) has been enforced in many states as an effort to regulate or ban certain breeds of dogs to prevent dog attacks against humans, with the larger victim being small children. BSL, especially breed bans result in multiple negative consequences that are costly for the owner, the community and the governing body that is enforcing the ban.

The city of Denver, Colorado has maintained a pit bull ban since 1989. Swann (2010) describes Denver's legislation in regard to breeds:

Denver, Colorado, enacted perhaps the nation's most draconian breed-specific legislation in 1989, in the wake of a five-year surge in pit-bull attacks that culminated with the mauling of a man, bitten more than seventy times. The Denver ordinances enjoin residents from owning, transporting, harboring, or selling pit bulls. The law proscribes American pit bull terriers, American Staffordshire terriers, and Staffordshire bull terriers, as well as any dog 'displaying the majority of physical traits' of those breeds, or any dog with 'distinguishing characteristics which substantially conform' to AKC or UKC standards for any of those breeds. One cannot drive through Denver with a pit bull without a permit evidencing intent to remove the dog from the city within six hours. Grandfathered pit bulls must be sterilized and tattooed or micro-chipped with an identification number; owners must carry at least \$100,000 in liability insurance and post conspicuous signs reading 'PIT BULLDOG' at each entrance to their properties. (p. 847-848)

Breed Specific Legislation

This is just part of Denver's animal ordinance in regard to pit bulls. Denver continues to enforce their pit bull ban even when surrounding towns decide review similar animal ordinances which show archaic and no longer effective, such as the case of Castle Rock, Colorado.

The scholarly publications and practitioner studies examined in this research study on breed specific laws include the following themes:

1. Any dog can bite.
2. Breed bans exacerbate irresponsible pet ownership and deprives responsible owners of these breeds proper socialization training for their dogs.
3. BSL brings about constitutional challenges.
4. BSL violates the American with Disabilities Act.

In this literature review, I examined the effectiveness of breed bans in preventing dog bites and increasing public safety, the consequences of BSL in regard to irresponsible ownership and the constitutional issues that arise in regard to due process and personal property rights. In addition, other laws under the BSL umbrella that can be healthy alternatives to complete bans on breeds will be explored to supplement the statistical data that will be sourced for the study.

Any Dog Can Bite

The truth is that any dog can bite. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) do not support BSL and consider it ineffective due to inaccurate dog bite data and breed determination (AVMA, 2018). So, the problem is real, but is BSL the answer?

According to Flembath (2016), dog bites are a reportable public health condition in the United States but have been consistently underreported. Though the reasons for the underreporting are unknown, Flembath states that the majority of the bites are caused by a dog

Breed Specific Legislation

acquainted with the victim, and there may be reluctance to report the bite in fear of getting the owner in trouble and possibly the getting the dog confiscated. The other potential reason could be the historical viewpoint that the bite should only be reported if there was a concern for rabies exposure, which is almost a non-issue now that dog vaccinations are accessible and affordable (p. 3-4).

McKenna (2011) mentioned his personal experience with dog bites in his article in *The Federal Lawyer*. “All dogs can bite, and they do so for so many reasons. I have been bitten by an AKC (American Kennel Club) -papered beagle, a Border collie, a Scottish terrier, a Chihuahua, a Schnauzer and a kitten. The worse bite of all was from the Chihuahua nearly 30 years ago. I still have the scars on my hand from that bite. I have never been bit by a Chow Chow, a ‘pit bull’, a German Shepherd, an Akita, or a Great Pyrenees--even though I or close family members have owned these breeds at various times” (p. 4). The breeds he stated that have not bit him are the restricted breeds listed under BSL and are considered dangerous under the legislation.

Breed Bans and Proper Socialization Training for Dogs

According to AVMA (2018), dogs are more likely to become aggressive when they are unsupervised, unneutered, and not socially conditioned to live closely with people or other dogs. Breed bans can give a community a false sense of security and can deemphasize the importance of socialization and training, which is critical to responsible pet ownership.

When owners have to keep their dogs illegally due to breed bans, they have to hide their dogs, which leads to lack of socialization and training. This also can lead to lack of proper veterinary care and vaccinations, which also poses a risk to the community should the dogs get loose.

Breed Specific Legislation

Schultz (2006) speaks of the Denver pit bull ban and the demographic of pit bull owners in Denver in her article regarding Dr. Todd Wolf's petition to end the pit bull ban in Denver:

‘The reason for the attacks is not because Pit Bulls historically were bred to be fighting dogs or have an excess of aggression, but because,’ Wolf says, ‘they became the dog of choice for irresponsible pet owners often described as having criminal records and living in low-income neighborhoods. These are the type of owners who are usually responsible when a pet attacks,’ Wolf alleges. And Denver's ban punishes not only these owners, but also responsible owners who properly care for and confine their pets. ‘There is always a certain kind of person that wants a dog for the wrong reason. Pit Bulls are very smart dogs, and they do very well with training. But they can be taught to do just about anything,’ says Adam Goldfarb, issues specialist with the Humane Society of the United States. (p. 9)

Cameron (2007) supports the benefits of socialization training when he mentions a training class at a pet supply store that prepares dogs to be “good canine citizens”, which makes them suitable for therapy work, for visiting hospitals, nursing homes and rehab centers to lift spirits, and even for going into libraries and classrooms to encourage children struggling to read. Instructor Linda Laun is confident as she pushes her training style: a positive rewards-based approach. There are six dogs in the class: a young Doberman, a golden retriever-poodle cross, a golden retriever, and three pit bulls. The pits have the most training and it shows: They are the best-behaved dogs in the class. One of the owners is Alisha Ward, 36, a mental-health counselor who volunteers with Alzheimer's and dementia patients. Always alongside is Sophia, a four-year-old albino American Staffordshire terrier, which is in the Pit Bull family, that Ward bought

Breed Specific Legislation

as a pup from a breeder who was marketing her for dogfighting. "People are cautious around her at first because she is a pit," says Ward. "But she comes up to people and is very cute, not at all aggressive. She even sits on hospital beds" (p. 49).

BSL Brings About Constitutional Challenges.

Dog owners faced with breed-specific legislation must rely on the judicial system to protect them from breed-specific regulations. As such, they have brought numerous suits challenging the constitutionality of the ordinances and laws burdening them. These suits generally allege that breed-specific legislation is unconstitutionally vague, as well as in violation of substantive due process and equal protection (Burstein, 2004, p. 2).

Regarding substantive due process, Barnett (2017) states,

A statute or law is generally found to be consistent with due process if it is rationally related to a governmental interest, end, or objective. The test under rational basis does not need to be written in a less restrictive manner, but rather should be written reasonably. Courts of all levels have consistently and universally held that the government does not violate the substantive due process clause by regulating dog ownership through its exercise of its police power.

Throughout the last thirty years, some courts have held that pit bull dogs are a unique public health hazard, and cities regulating is rationally related to public health and safety. However, in 2010, the United States District Court for the District of Colorado in *Dias v. City of Denver* found that 'a reasonable trier of fact may find that ... there exists no rational basis for a breed specific ordinance' because of developments in the study of breeds, aggression, and misuse of

Breed Specific Legislation

statistics in previous breed-specific legislation cases. It seems that this is where the evolution of case law is taking the substantive due process issue. (p. 6)

Pit bull owners have argued equal protection violations due to discrimination against the dog and the owner. Burstein (2004) has effectively explained inclusivity with regards to equal protection challenges with BSL.

Pit bull owners that bring equal protection challenges argue the reasonableness of BSL by asserting the law is under inclusive, stating that pit bulls are singled out as uniquely dangerous and fails to recognize other dogs as equally dangerous and can also pose a threat to society (p. 3).

BSL Violates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

“In addition to violating certain constitutional protections, many breed-discriminatory ordinances also violate the Americans with Disabilities Act. In its *Guidance for the Americans with Disabilities Act*, the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division noted: “The department does not believe it is either appropriate or consistent with the ADA to defer to local laws that prohibit certain breeds of dogs based on local concerns that these breeds may have a history of unprovoked aggression or attacks.” See *Sak v. City of Aurelia Iowa*, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Iowa, Western Division 2011 WL 6826146 (N.D. Iowa 2011), Memorandum Opinion and Order Regarding Plaintiff’s Motion for Preliminary Injunction Dated December 28, 2011” (bestfriends.org).

According to the Denver Post (2013) the cities of Denver and Aurora, who are upholding put bull bans, are compliant with ADA and are making exceptions by allowing all breeds as service or therapy dogs to individuals with disabilities. Animal Control agencies for both cities are directed by governing bodies to look the other way when they encounter a pit bull as a

Breed Specific Legislation

service dog. Aurora has implemented strict guidelines for having pit bulls as service dogs such as mandatory back or front yard fencing and signage on the owner's property indicating that a pit bull lives on the premises (<https://www.denverpost.com/2013/08/05/pit-bull-bans-ada-rules-can-co-exist/>).

Conclusion:

Scholarly publications and news articles examined in this study point to the ineffectiveness of Breed Specific Legislation, specifically breed bans. Additionally, authoritative animal organizations such as the ASPCA, AVMA, and the authors of the scholarly and law articles reveal that all dogs bite, not just restricted breeds. BSL does not address the social issue of irresponsible ownership and raises questions regarding the constitutionality of breed laws.

Though there has been research conducted regarding BSL, the researchers or authors of the articles have not been able to conclude positive outcomes of enforcing BSL. BSL is labor intensive to enforce, costly to the governing body enforcing the ban, and costly to the dog owner.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction:

The purpose of research study was to evaluate Breed Specific Legislation, in particular breed bans, as an effective tool to prevent dog bites. Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) is enforced in some communities in the form of a breed ban, particularly a pit bull ban, to increase public safety and to ensure a community a sense of security. It consisted of a mixed method design of gathering qualitative and quantitative data to complete my research.

My original intent was to gather qualitative data in the form of interviews with animal organizations such as the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) to gather expert opinion on Breed Specific Legislation and the effectiveness of pit bull bans, especially in the city of Denver where there is a current pit bull ban that has been enforced since 1989 and has become the model ordinance for the state of Colorado. I also sought interviews with communities that enforce BSL but do not enforce a pit bull ban, such as San Francisco, California that enforces the sterilization of pit bulls. I would be comparing the two areas with their respective dog bite data, and any mitigating circumstances surrounding that data, such as the owner being the victim due to mishandling. The quantitative data would be the dog bite data I gather from various sources such as dogbite.org and Statista. I also reached out to the city and county of Denver and the city and county of San Francisco to obtain dog bite data for their areas.

As recently as May 2018, the Town of Castle Rock, just 36 miles south of Denver, revised their animal ordinance that included lifting a pit bull ban after 26 years of enforcement.

Breed Specific Legislation

The new animal ordinance replaced the ban with two-tier system of determining dangerous and potentially dangerous dogs based on behavior and not breed. The Town Council came to a vote to revise the animal code based on data presented. Included in the data was dog bite data for the Town of Castle Rock for year period 2011-2016, which was the quantitative data for this study. Qualitative data consisted of 2 interviews, one with a resident of Castle Rock that was instrumental in the campaign to end BSL in Castle Rock and the Deputy City Attorney of Castle Rock. Also, part of the qualitative data for this study was a survey that was given to the residents of Castle Rock during an open house facilitated by the Town staff in April 2017 that asked for feedback on the animal code and proposed changes. I received the dog bite data and the survey responses from a single source, therefore this became a convergent design of mixed methods research. “In a convergent design, a researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data in parallel, usually at the same time and with respect to the same general research problem.” (Leedy, 2016, p.313)

Research Question: Is Breed Specific Legislation, particularly breed bans, an effective tool in preventing dog bites?

Based on my research questions, my intent was to find two areas, one with a breed ban and one without a breed ban and compare the dog bite data of the areas to find correlation (or lack of) between breeds and number of bite incidents. With the adoption of a new animal ordinance by the Town of Castle Rock, I was able to turn this project into a single case study on the Town of Castle Rock and how they decided to update their animal ordinance that included repealing their breed ban.

Breed Specific Legislation

Dependent and Independent Variables

The dependent variable in this study was: are an effective tool in preventing dog bites. The independent variable being examined is Breed Specific Legislation, particularly breed bans. This study focused on the relationship between BSL, specifically breed bans and their effectiveness in preventing dog bites. Using secondary data provided by the Castle Rock resident during an interview that consisted of what was presented to the Town Council, I expected to find no correlational relationship between the independent and dependent variables. As mentioned in Chapter 2, any dog can bite. Enforcing a ban on certain breeds of dogs will not stop unbanned dogs from biting.

Data Collection Plan Overview

Primary data was collected in the form of an interview with a Castle Rock resident who supported the change in the animal ordinance and campaigned to end the breed ban in Castle Rock. In that interview, I was provided dog bite data for the Town of Castle for year period 2011-2016 and 530 survey responses from residents and non-residents of Castle Rock opining on the animal ordinance and the proposed changes of the animal ordinance. Of the 530 responses, 446 specifically mentioned BSL and whether they supported repealing the ban or keeping the ban in place. This secondary data I was provided became the qualitative and quantitative data set used to perform the case study. The second collection of primary data was in the form of a second interview with the Deputy Town Attorney of Castle Rock. In that interview, a legislative timeline leading up the Town Council vote was provided and a verification on the authenticity of the data set received from first interview was also provided.

Population Sampling Strategy:

Breed Specific Legislation

As this is a single case study on a town in Colorado that recently repealed their pit bull ban as part of a new animal ordinance, the participants of the study were the survey participants who either attended the open house on April 2017 in the Town of Castle Rock, and those who did not attend the open house and sent their survey response electronically. These participants were pre-selected for the study as the Town staff gave out the survey one year and one month prior to the Town Council vote and the survey copies were presented to the Town Council for review. The survey responses were scanned into a 700-page document. In that document, 530 survey responses were found, both electronic and hard copy. Of the 530 survey responses, 446 survey responses specifically mentioned BSL or breed ban in the comments. Those 446 survey participants became my target population for this case study.

Procedure

Since the quantitative and qualitative data was provided during the first interview, both sets were very raw and needed organization. The qualitative data was dog bite data for the Town of Castle Rock for year period 2011-2016. It was categorized by date, breed, age of victim and circumstances of dog bite. To address my main research question, the data had been organized to show top 10 breeds with the most bite incidents. Also generated from the dog bite data were key words in the dog bite circumstances column to get an idea of the most common bite circumstances across all breeds. The qualitative data came in the form of survey responses, both electronic and hard copy, from residents and non-residents who attended the open house on April 2017, and those who received the survey via email. The survey responses were scanned into a 700-page PDF document. In that document were 530 survey responses, with surveys having multiple pages due to participant comments. While reading through the 700-page document, I

Breed Specific Legislation

was able to find 446 survey responses where BSL or breed ban was mentioned in the comments, this became the target population for my study.

Data Processing and Analysis

In the analysis of the quantitative data, I found the very raw data had to be modified in order for it to be clearer and more robust. The organized product from the dog bite data, which included the top 10 breeds of dogs with the most bite incidents, was able to address my main research question at least for the Town of Castle Rock. This data showed that the top 10 breeds with the most bite incidents are not necessarily the breeds on the restricted breeds list. The qualitative data in the form of the survey and interviews. Though the survey gave a very broad question regarding feedback on the animal ordinance that yielded 530 responses, those responses were strictly comments. Certain key words and themes were searched to get responses that were specific to BSL or breed bans. In those responses, another search for key words relating to repealing or maintaining the breed ban were also taken place.

External and Internal Validity

Leedy (2016) states that “internal validity of a research study is the extent to which its design and the data it yields allow the researcher to draw accurate conclusions about cause-and-effect and other relationships within the data” (p.85). Because I expected no correlational relationship between the independent and the dependent variable, the cause-and-effect relationship does not exist therefore internal validity is low. Breed bans cannot prevent dog bites if dogs not on the list of restricted breeds can also bite. Dog bite data provided in the study shows that dogs of all breeds with bite incidents, not just pit bulls.

With regard to external validity, Leedy (2016) offers strategies to enhance external validity: a real-life setting, a representative sample, and replication in a different context. (p. 87)

Breed Specific Legislation

The nature of this study was based on a town that adopted a new animal ordinance that included repealing a breed ban. The data used for this study was part of many data sets presented to the Town Council of Castle Rock before they went to a vote. The external validity of the data would be considered high level as the data was sourced from the Town itself, which addresses the real-life setting element of enhancing external validity. The representative sample consisted of the 446 surveys responses specifically mentioning BSL or the breed ban, taken from the 530 surveys responses provided to me for analysis. Replication in a different context can be highly likely as there are other towns in Colorado that still have breed bans and can follow suit to Castle Rock. There are also towns and municipalities in Colorado that do not have a breed bans that can be part of a similar study.

Conclusion

Considering time constraints, I was fortunate to be able to obtain quantitative data in the form of dog bite statistics for the town of Castle Rock and qualitative data in the form of survey responses and interviews to complete a single case study on the town of Castle Rock, Colorado and their new animal ordinance which includes lifting a pit bull ban that had been enforced for 26 years. After intense organization of the data set, my main research question should've been addressed: Is BSL, particularly breed bans, effective in preventing dog bites?

The mixed method of obtaining the quantitative and qualitative data was the suitable method for this research project. The adoption of a new animal ordinance for the Town of Castle Rock, Colorado that included repealing a breed ban that had been enforced since 1992 was result of the Town Council's unanimous vote 5-0, with 2 council members not in attendance.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of Breed Specific Legislation (BSL), particularly breed bans, in preventing or reducing dog bites. The focus of this study is the Town of Castle Rock, Colorado, which has recently updated their animal ordinance via town council vote on May 1, 2018. Included in this animal ordinance is a recommendation by a team in the Town Attorney's office to lift the ban on pit bulls, a ban that was enforced for 25 years. This single case study addresses my research question: are breed bans an effective tool for preventing dog bites?

Overview of Methodology

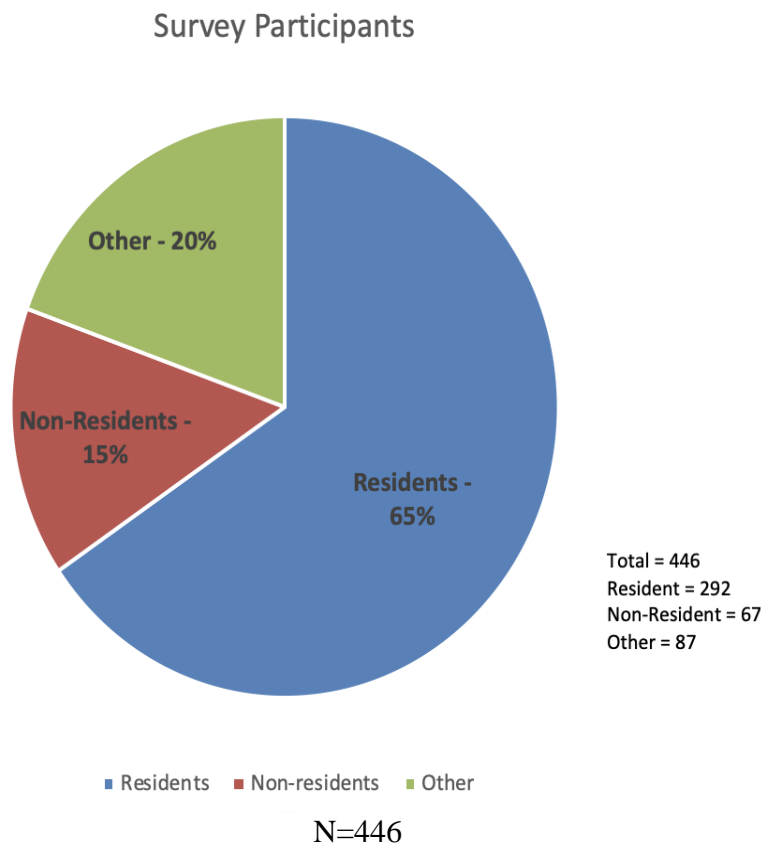
The evaluation was based on deploying a mixed-method quantitative and qualitative study by examining dog bite data over a 6-year period (2011-2016) and comparing it to neighboring town Centennial's dog bite data (2010-2017) whose never enforced a breed specific ban as the qualitative data. Quantitative data consisted of interviews with the Deputy City Attorney of the Town of Castle Rock and a resident of Town who was instrumental in the End BSL campaign that led town council's decision to lift the ban. In addition, residents of Castle Rock and surrounding areas responded to a survey for feedback on the Castle Rock's animal code before the ban lift.

*Qualitative Data Results and Findings**Surveys:*

In April of 2017 and in January of 2018, the town of Castle Rock held open houses for citizens living and/or working in Castle Rock to participate in a survey for feedback on the town's animal ordinance. Approximately 150 people were in attendance at each open house. The

Breed Specific Legislation

surveys were handed out to those in attendance at the open house and an email survey was also sent out to those on the town's mailing list. The survey yielded 530 responses, 446 of which mentioned BSL specifically and whether they supported or didn't support repealing the breed specific ban.



Of the survey participants, 292 were residents (65%), 67 were non-residents (15%) which consisted of citizens residing outside of Castle Rock that were working or ran businesses in the Town, or former residents wanting to voice their concerns. A third category, named Other (20%), were those who gave a voice but did not state their residency on the survey. Survey participants who attended the open houses were given a hard copy survey. An email form of the survey was also sent out to those on the Town's mailing list. Below are samples of the survey that was given out, both electronic and hard copy, respectively.

Breed Specific Legislation

Animal Ordinance Form

Give us your feedback!


As a home rule municipality, the Town of Castle Rock has its own set of local laws and codes. From time to time, those local laws need to be reviewed. A topic currently being discussed relates to animals, and the Town wants resident feedback. Tell us about dogs, cats, chickens, bees, or other animals. The Town is also looking for feedback related to licensing requirements; the number and kinds of animals allowed; breed-specific bans; regulations related to pet shops, kennels or doggie daycares; as well as handling activities such as fostering, rescues and feral cats. Resident feedback will be provided to Town Council and will be taken into consideration regarding changes that may be made to Town Code related to animals. An update to Council is anticipated as early as May. Please note that these codes are separate from HOA rules and regulations.

Please tell us your thoughts on Town Code related to animals.

Are you a resident of Castle Rock?

[Redacted area]


Breed Specific Legislation


 *Tell us your thoughts during our*
Animal Ordinance Review

We want your feedback!

As a home rule municipality, the Town of Castle Rock has its own set of local laws and codes. From time to time, those local laws need to be reviewed. A topic currently being discussed relates to animals. We want your feedback!

Please write clearly. Feel free to discuss any or all of the topics we presented tonight.

Name: 

Resident or non-resident? 

Email: _____

How do you hear about Town news? (Check all that apply.)

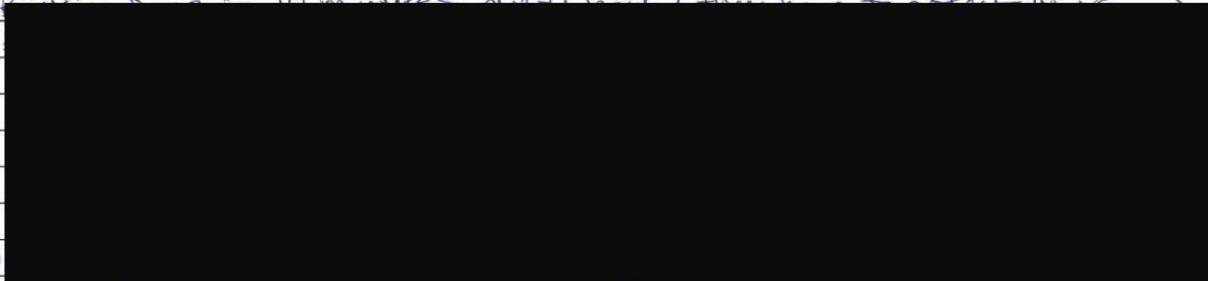
☒ Online at CRgov.com
 ☐ Social media (Facebook/Twitter, etc.)
 ☒ Roadway sign

☐ Email
 ☐ Local newspaper article

☐ A neighbor
 ☒ By mail

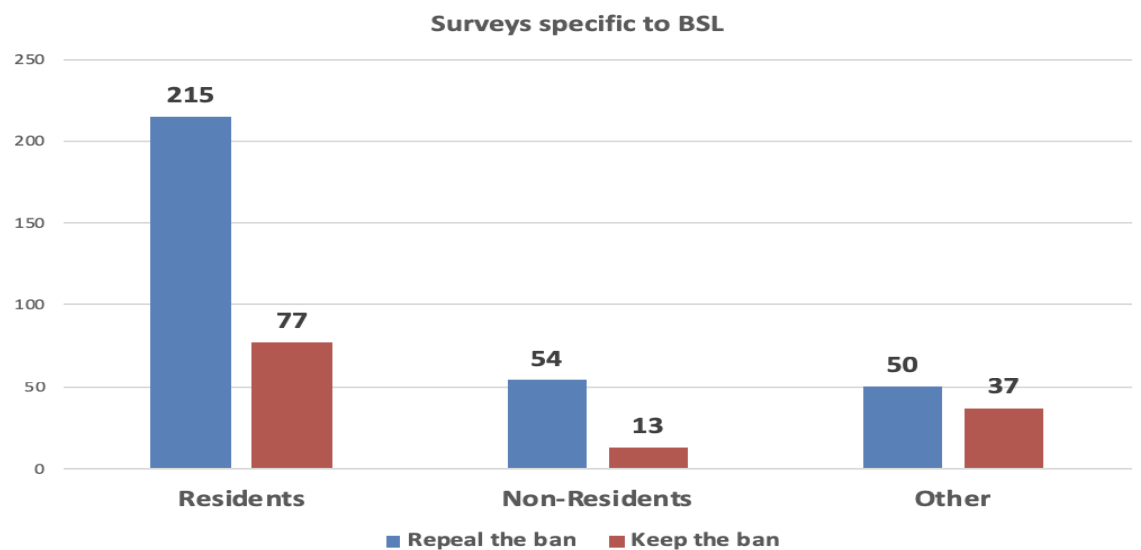
Please tell us your thoughts on Town Code related to animals. *

5-10 minutes every hour / they have to read "this"



According to the Town City Attorney, the survey yielded 530 responses, hard copy and electronic combined. Those surveys, with some being duplicated but included in the page count were scanned into a single 702-page document that was shared with me from the Castle Rock resident that I interviewed. Of those 530 survey responses, 446 of them mentioned BSL specifically.

Breed Specific Legislation

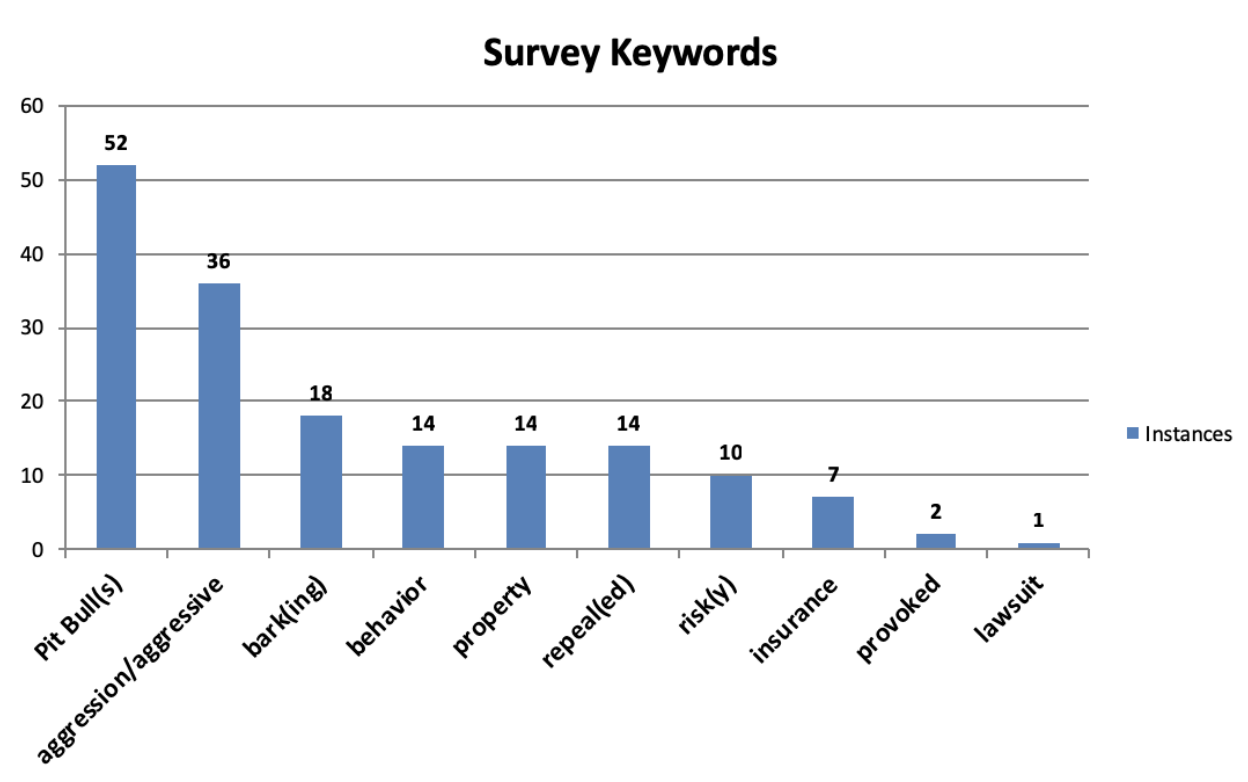


N=446

Once the survey responses were divided by participant category (Resident, Non-Resident and Other) each participant category was divided on who supported the repeal the breed-specific ban or to keep the breed-specific ban. Of the Residents, 215 (74%) were in favor of repealing the breed-specific ban and the remaining 77 (26%) were in favor of keeping the breed-specific ban. The Non-Residents had 54 supporters (81%) to repeal the ban while 13 (19%) wanted the ban in place. The category Other, again designated due to lack of resident or non-resident designation on the survey, had 50 participants (57%) supporting the repeal of the ban while 37 participants (43%).

The survey generated strong comments from both residents and non-residents. Whether they supported the revision to the animal code to repeal the pit bull ban or they wanted the ban to stay in place, the comments showed strong opinions on both sides.

Breed Specific Legislation



N=168

The table above shows the number of instances shown for certain key words that were in the survey comments, with the word “pit bull” having the most instances. With this information, we can have a sense of what was on the minds of the survey participants and the level of concern for the animal code, specifically in regard to the breed ban. Below are a few examples of the survey comments regarding the breed-specific ban:

- “I know more people have been bit by Chihuahuas than Pit Bulls!” - Castle Rock resident
- “Please keep the pit bull ban in place!- Castle Rock resident
- “I do not think there should be a breed specific legislation, period. I am a veterinary technician.”- Castle Rock resident
- “No breed specific bans should be enforced, as they have been not been proven to be supported by scientific evidence.”- Castle Rock resident

Breed Specific Legislation

- “When pit bulls maul or kill other animals, it isn’t in the news. Pit Bulls killed around 24,000 other dogs and 13,000 cats in 2015 alone.”-Non resident

Interviews:

Interviewee 1: Castle Rock resident who started the EndBSL campaign that was instrumental in the Town Council’s vote to repeal the pit bull ban.

Interview 1 question 1:

Please describe your lobbying efforts that resulted in the Town Council’s vote to update the animal code that included lifting the pit bull ban.

Response question 1:

- A resident since 2007, had been fostering dogs in 2016 and didn’t realize there was a ban
- Started a grass roots effort with the help of a family member in creating a website and a Facebook page
- Started a petition with website and gathered signatures in support of repealing the ban (shared google folder with petition attached and saw 914 signatures)
- Reached out to council members and the town attorney to advocate for lifting the ban

Interview 1 question 2:

What was the strategy in getting the Town Council to consider lifting the ban?

Response question 2:

- Meetings with the Mayor and phone calls to Town Council
- Collected dog bite data from surrounding regions (with no ban)
- Advocated licensing and ownership education, modeled after Calgary, Canada (discussed contents of Google folder shared as it contained all the information presented to the Town Council, including bite data and surveys)

Breed Specific Legislation

Interviewee 2: Deputy City Attorney for the Town of Castle Rock

Interview 2 question 1:

What catalyzed the need to update the animal code?

Interview 2 response 1:

- The Town Attorney's office which consisted of the Town Attorney, the Deputy Town Attorney and staff members had been working on it for a year before going before the council on March 6, 2018
- The code was 26 years old and since then the Town has grown in population and family pets were part of that growth
- Even with the ban there are still approximately 300 pit bulls or pit bull mixes residing within the Town limits.

During the interview with the Deputy Town Attorney, a legislative time line was discussed that led to the Town Council vote on May 1, 2018 which included:

April 2017 – first open house held by the Town where 150 people were in attendance and animal code survey has given out

January 2018 – second open house held, approximately 150 in attendance and survey was given out again

March 2018 – recommendation to Town Council to replace the current breed ban with a two-tiered system based on behavior not breed.


April 2018 – first reading of the proposed animal code, Council voted 5-2 to bring back for a second reading.

Breed Specific Legislation

May 2018 – Council voted 5-0 (2 members not in attendance) in favor of the proposed changes to the animal code which includes repealing the breed ban and replacing with the two-tiered behavioral-based system.

Quantitative Data Results and Findings:

Data presented to the Town Council of Castle Rock also included an excel spreadsheet containing dog bite data for the Town for period of 2011-2016 that was sourced from Castle Rock Animal Control. This data was included in the presentation to the Town Council to support the repeal of the breed ban.

CR Dog Bites 2011-2016 (Top 10 Breeds)		
Breed	 Incident	Percent
Chihuahua	21	14.19%
German Shepherd	20	13.51%
Terrier X	17	11.49%
Dachshund	16	10.81%
Australian Shepherd	15	10.14%
Black Labrador Retriever	14	9.46%
Labrador Retriever X	13	8.78%
Black Labrador Retriever X	12	8.11%
Unknown	10	6.76%
German Shepherd X	10	6.76%
Grand Total	148	100.00%

The above table shows the top 10 breeds with the most bite incidents for the Town of Castle Rock. The breeds with the X indicate a mixed breed. The Pit Bull Terrier or Pit Bull Terrier mixed does not show in the top 10, even with 300 pit bulls residing in the Town limits.

Breed Specific Legislation

CR Number of Incidents by Year (All breeds)

Row Labels	Count of Year
2011	75
2012	75
2013	69
2014	71
2015	77
2016	83
Grand Total	450

The above table shows the number of bite incidents broken down by year for all of the breeds in the Town of Castle Rock. This shows the total number of 450 incidents for the 6-year period. Included in the original bite data spreadsheet were the bite incidents for Pit Bull Terrier and Pit Bull Terrier mix which are 2 and 9, respectively. This number combined only counts for 2.4% of the total number of bite incidents for 6-year period.

City of Centennial (Dog Bites 2010-2017)

Breed	Total	Percent
Labrador Retriever	87	26.77%
German Shepherd	47	14.46%
Boxer	27	8.31%
Chihuahua	27	8.31%
Australian Cattle Dog	26	8.00%
Border Collie	25	7.69%
Pit Bull Terrier	24	7.38%
Golden Retriever	23	7.08%
Australian Shepherd	20	6.15%
Terrier	19	5.85%
Grand Total	325	100.00%

Breed Specific Legislation

This table shows the dog bite data for a neighboring jurisdiction, the City of Centennial. This was presented to the Town Council along with dog bite data of other surrounding areas. The City of Centennial has never enacted a breed ban. The Pit Bull Terrier, showing highlighted above, is among the top 10 breeds for bite incidents but only 24 (7.38%) out of 325 total incidents in the year period 2010-2017. This is a small number compared to the top breed, the Labrador Retriever, which is not among the list of restricted breeds.

Summary of Key Findings

The results of this study show that both the qualitative and quantitative data provided above address my research question that breed bans are not effective in preventing dog bites. The qualitative data which is the dog bite data show breeds not on the restricted breed list as the top breeds with the most bites in the area of focus, which is the Town of Castle Rock. Supplemental qualitative data was provided in the case study to show that the Town Council of Castle Rock reviewed dog bite data from neighboring jurisdictions such as the City of Centennial, which had no history of having a breed ban.

Qualitative data from the survey participants showed majority support for repealing the breed ban. Survey comments from those participants show that they believe the breed ban is not effective and should not be upheld. Interviews with a Castle Rock resident and the Deputy City Attorney of the Town of Castle rock give background information on the data presented to the Town Council and support the validity of that data.

The town of Castle Rock has enforced a pit bull ban from 1992-2018. In reviewing dog bite data from 2011-2016, pit bull or pit bull mixed breeds did not come up in the top 10 breeds for bite incidents, however, there were a total 11 bite incidents involving pit bulls and pit bull mixed breeds in that same year period, which is only 2.4% of total incidents. The deputy town

Breed Specific Legislation

attorney stated in her interview that with the ban Castle Rock still has 300 pit bulls residing within the town borders. This showed the need for review of the animal code with respect to the breed specific ban. Comparing with a neighboring town that never adopted a pit bull ban, the dog bite data for the City of Centennial shows the Pit Bull terrier involved in 24 bite incidents out of total of 325 incidents from 2010-2017, which is 7.38%.

The results from the survey requesting feedback regarding the animal code show that 75% of 446 survey participants (residents and non-residents) were in favor of repealing the breed specific ban, which also weighed in on the town council vote.

On May 1, 2018 with 5 of the 7 members present for the vote to update the animal ordinance which included repealing the breed specific ban, the council voted unanimously 5-0 in favor of updating the animal code and adopting a two-tiered system based on behavior and not breed.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction:

The purpose of this study is to evaluate if breed specific legislation is an effective tool to prevent dog bites. through a case study of the town of Castle Rock, Colorado and their newly adopted animal ordinance. This evaluation was based on mixed-method research consisting of quantitative data in the form of dog bite data for the Town of Castle for year period 2011-2016. As a comparison with a city that has no breed ban, analysis of dog bite data for the City of Centennial, Colorado was also done for the year period 2010-2017. Quantitative data in the form of a survey was taken by the residents of Castle Rock and residents of surrounding areas requesting their feedback on the Castle Rock animal ordinance, which included a pit bull ban that had been enforced since 1992. This data was provided during an interview with a Castle Rock resident who was instrumental in the campaign to end the pit bull ban. Additional data regarding the timeline of events leading to the town council vote was provided in an interview with the deputy town attorney.

This chapter gives an overview of the results of the quantitative and qualitative data and how it led to a unanimous vote by the Castle Rock town council to update the animal code which included repealing the pit bull ban.

Conclusions:

Community involvement via survey participation from residents and non-residents is a key element in adopting a new animal ordinance. According to the Deputy Town Attorney, the attendance of the open houses and civic participation with regards to adopt new legislation in the town of Castle Rock was unprecedented. In essence, the Town of Castle Rock did the right thing by

Breed Specific Legislation

hearing the concerns of the survey participants and those in attendance of the open houses and council meetings. Castle Rock's new animal code effective June 1, 2018 in regard to breed restrictions is as follows:

"No dogs are restricted based on based on their appearance. Restrictions are now based on dog behavior, are identified in a two-tiered system defining potentially dangerous dogs and dangerous dogs. A dog need not bite to be determined as potentially dangerous. A potentially dangerous dog may be allowed to remain in the Town under court ordered restrictions. A dog determined to be a dangerous dog is not allowed in the Town." (crgov.com)

This recent legislative change for the Town of Castle of Rock addresses my main research question that Breed Specific Legislation, particularly breed bans, is not effective in preventing dog bites. Quantitative and qualitative data was gathered and analyzed to show the Town of Castle Rock, Colorado and their residents believe the pit bull ban they had enforced for 26 years was no longer conducive to the social climate of Castle Rock and was indeed ineffective legislative that hurt more than helped.

The literature review examined in this study also addresses my main research question and deems BSL as ineffective due to "inaccurate dog bite data and breed determination" (AVMA, 2018). Though the AVMA does not mention Castle Rock specifically, it does mention Denver and how adamant the city is in upholding their pit bull ban, even when surrounding towns such as Castle Rock are repealing their pit bull bans.

The literature also addresses lack of socialization training when dogs are in hiding due to do bans. Just like humans, if they are not socialized or integrated into society, they can become sociopaths and a threat to the community. The constitutionality of BSL is also questioned as it

Breed Specific Legislation

appears to be violation of substantive due process and equal protection. BSL also violates personal property rights and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division stated that BSL is not appropriate or consistent with ADA because the ADA does not restrict breeds for service or therapy dogs.

In essence, Breed Specific Legislation can be considered discrimination and a social injustice, not just to the dogs but to dog owners as well.

Recommendations:

The new animal ordinance in Castle Rock was a progressive move for the State of Colorado. However, there are still areas other than the City of Denver that still uphold a pit bull ban.

1. Recommend that Castle Rock's new animal ordinance become the model ordinance for the rest of Colorado. The two-tiered system for determining dangerous dog behavior will increase public safety as it will penalize unruly dog owners instead of untrained or unsocialized dogs, through no fault of their own.
2. For Castle Rock's ordinance to be considered a "best practice" and model for other Colorado communities, Castle Rock Animal Control should establish programs to provide education and training for current pit bull owners. This would help to integrate pit bulls into society and reduce the fear in other dogs or their owners. These programs should include youth education so that children can learn how to handle dogs as children are likely victims of dog bites.
3. According to the website BSL Census (bslcensus.org) 21 states still enforce some form of BSL. Recommend to state legislators in those states where BSL is fully enforced to repeal BSL as it is counterproductive, labor intensive and costly.

Breed Specific Legislation

Additionally, the recommendations made by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) to dog bite prevention should be considered for reform of BSL in the United States:

1. Enforcement of generic, non-breed-specific dangerous dog laws, with an emphasis on chronically irresponsible owners
2. Enforcement of animal control ordinances such as leash laws, by trained animal care and control officers
3. Prohibition of dog fighting
4. Encouraging neutering for dogs not intended for breeding
5. School-based and adult education programs that teach pet selection strategies, pet care and responsibility, and bite prevention. (AVMA, 2018)

Finally, the American Bar Association (ABA) recommendation regarding BSL should be considered and adopted for use: “urge all state, territorial, and local legislative bodies and government agencies to adopt comprehensive breed-neutral dangerous dog/reckless owner laws that ensure due process protection for owners, encourage responsible pet ownership and focus on the behavior of both dog and owners, and to repeal any breed-discriminatory or breed specific provisions” (bestfriends.org).

Breed Specific Legislation

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