

**House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA**

Dear

I am writing to you concerning the issue of breed specific legislation in the form of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (DDA) legislation as amended in 1997.

I feel that this law which attempts to ban dogs based on their physical appearance has not and is not working to protect the public. Breed specific legislation is flawed because it assumes that all dogs of a specific breed or 'type' are inherently dangerous. This is not true and not based on any factual evidence, nor supported by the majority of organisations; especially those who work with and understand dogs. It is not based on any scientific fact or logical thinking. A dog can not be proven to be 'dangerous' based on its appearance.

I think it is time to focus on the real problem – the other end of the lead. It is irresponsible and uneducated owners and breeders who need to be targeted. The DDA has failed to properly address the problem of irresponsible owners and breeders who create dangerous dogs, they go about largely unaffected, whilst pet owners fall victim to a system where the full weight of law is thrown at them, simply for owning a family pet which looks like a prohibited dog-the definition of which is vague, confusing and open to interpretation.

When the law was first introduced, 'banned' dogs had to be registered by a given date, the registry (Index of Exempted Dogs) then closed to dog owners. Currently a dog can only be registered when ordered by a court. Family pets have and continue to be seized and held in kennels at huge public expense whilst awaiting court hearings. Dogs which have committed no crime languish away in kennels for months, there are serious welfare implications for the long term detainment of seized dogs; pets have suffered physically and psychologically.

When their cases come to court, the point is repeatedly made that the pet dog is friendly, of no danger to the public and responsibly owned - these dogs, of no danger to the public, are then by order of the court, registered onto the Index of Exempted Dogs and eventually returned to their families 'legalised'. The whole process from point of enforced separation between family and cherished pet to the eventual release and return home of the dog is an extremely upsetting process for those involved.

I would like to see the law changed now so that owners can take their own steps to register their dog and bring it within the law, as an immediate interim measure. Enabling owner-led registration should be a short term measure until a complete overhaul of the DDA legislation can be established.

The DDA should in my opinion be replaced with legislation which promotes responsible dog ownership and education, with penalties for owners and breeders acting irresponsibly and with no regard for their dogs welfare, whilst not being aimed at any dog based on its appearance; non breed specific legislation.

The DDA has proved to be unworkable and is not a solution to the problem of 'dangerous' dogs. The real problem is 'dangerous' owners. It is not protecting the public or the welfare of dogs. It is time to focus on the other end of the lead.

I would like to know your views on this issue and look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely