



Potter's Angels Rescue

Breed Specific Legislation

BSL is the practice of using laws to regulate and restrict dog ownership based on the physical appearance of someone's dog. It stems from the belief that some dogs are just born bad or predisposed to violent behavior. There are currently 36 breeds and mixes that are unfairly restricted in various groupings throughout the U.S. most notably the Pit Bull at this moment. In 20 years who knows who we will decide to hate.

It has changed throughout the years dependent on who we decided to blame for our ignorant human behavior. In fact, that has been the only thing that has remained constant: our ignorance. The breeds that we decided to hate were more like the flavor of the month or rather the breed of the decade.

In the early 19th century as conflict over slavery grew so did a negative public attitude towards bloodhounds AKA slave catchers. They became the object of attraction for ignorant minded people that wanted to use them for anti-social purposes thus creating a vicious stereo type for the breed as maulings and fatalities were reported in the public press.

In the 20th century other breeds replaced the bloodhound as the object of dread most notably the German Shepherd Dog which was actually banned in Australia from 1928-1973. This also included the Doberman Pinscher and the Rottweiler. During this time we are busy hating other breeds- the object of our destruction today was the object of our affection then.

The Pit Bull Terrier was the all American dog and in fact was the symbol of the US on a WWI propaganda poster. The breed was the all American hero with Sergeant Stubby being the first dog to gain a military title and saving countless American lives in combat. Petie the pup of the Little Rascals was the first AKC registered Staffordshire Terrier. So what could have happened to make us turn our backs so quickly and entirely on this once loved and embraced breed?

Simply put - the media and press. In 1976 the Animal Welfare Act was created to make trafficking dogs for the purpose of dog fighting a crime. Instead of focusing on the hardened criminals partaking in such a violent and horrendous blood sport, they honed in on the dogs that were being victimized. As had happened with the bloodhound, the myths attracted unsavory people that wanted the dogs for negative functions or to make themselves look tough.

The sensationalized media reporting of incidents involving pit bull type dogs linked them almost exclusively to criminal activity in the public mind. This small percentage of dogs used for criminal activity came to define the millions of pit bull type dogs living as part of the family in homes throughout the U.S. Even though scientific data stated that breeds of dogs responsible for human fatalities varied and "did not identify specific breeds that were more likely to bite or kill therefore deeming it inappropriate to discriminate for policy making decisions. In fact, there is not one major animal or health organization that supports breed discrimination.

Yet it continues and they are not only taking down pit bulls but any mixed dog that may resemble or share features of a pit bull pulling them out of homes and placing them into high kill shelters where they stand little and in some cases no chance of making it out alive. Some counties will not adopt out any pit bulls or mixes so the ones that are seized or picked up as a stray are automatically killed regardless of their temperament.

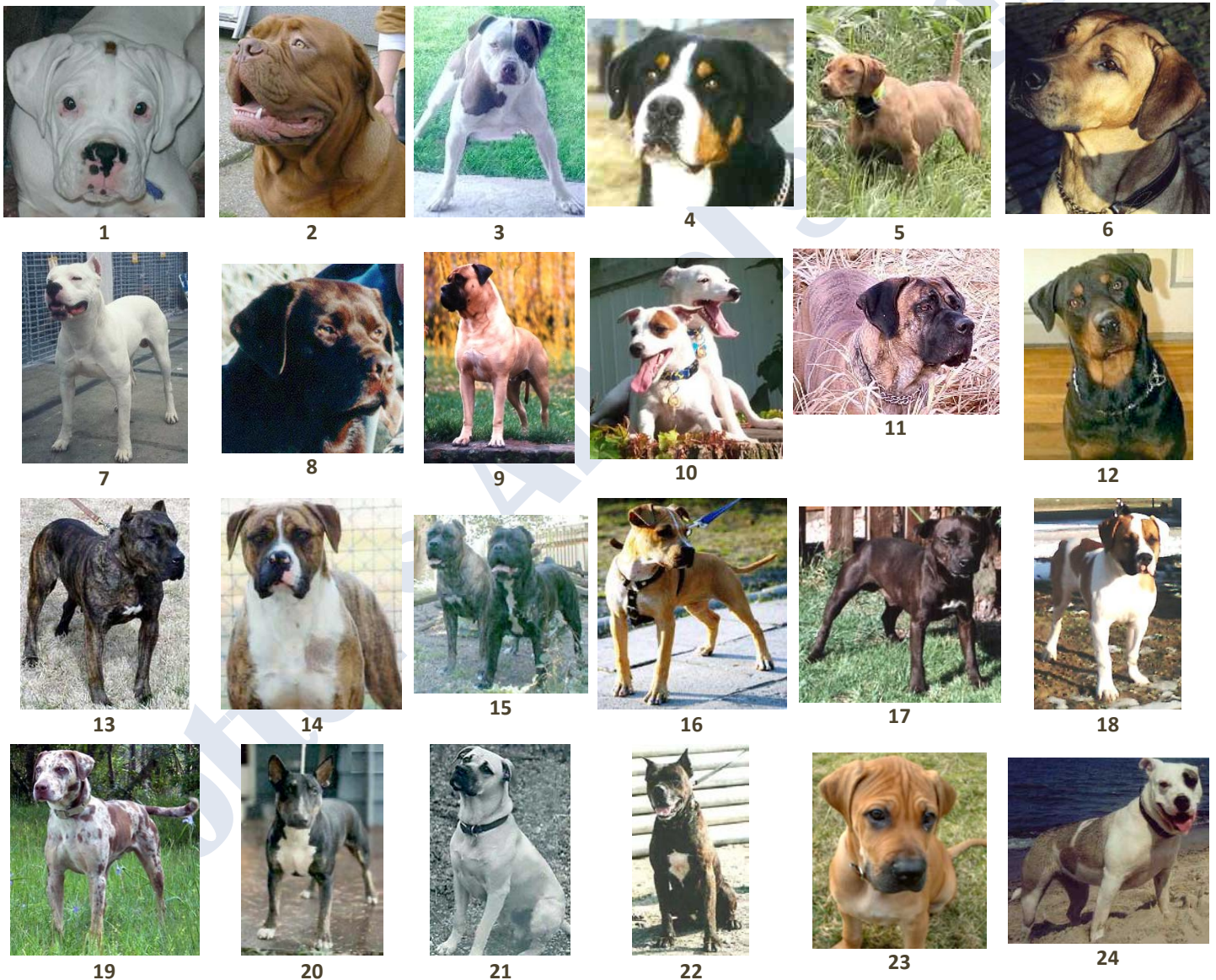
The bottom line is BSL does NOT make communities safer. Study after study has proven this. Studies show that areas practicing BSL have had no significant changes in dog attacks or fatalities since enlisting the BSL program. The reason for this is quite simply because although the dogs die the people that owned them

remain the same and replace them with a different dog that they neglect or abuse thus creating the same overall temperament as there was before, just in a different breed.

Dogs do not bite due to their breed or appearance; they bite due to a lack of socialization, neglect, abuse, tethering, confinement and isolation. The only thing BSL does besides kill thousands of innocent lives is cost the tax payers a hefty sum for the false idea that they are making their community safer.

Another point of failure for BSL is the method used to identify which dogs should be seized and destroyed. It is well known that even experts cannot look at a dog and determine its breed. In a study, a group of animal care professionals were asked to view 20 dogs and determine their breeds. They were surprised with how few of them they correctly identified and it is believed that close to 75% of the pit bull identifications made by shelter workers, ACO's, and law enforcement officers are wrong. This means that many of the dogs condemned by BSL are not even pit bulls.

See if you can find the pit bull in this picture



(answer 16)

For more information on what you can do to put an end to BSL there is a fantastically educational website that you should visit at www.defendingdog.com