



THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

Celebrating Animals | Confronting Cruelty

Eric L. Bernthal, Esq.
Chair of the Board

Jennifer Leaning, M.D., S.M.H.
Vice Chair

Jason Weiss
Second Vice Chair

Kathleen M. Linehan, Esq.
Board Treasurer

Wayne Pacelle
*President
& Chief Executive Officer*

Michael Markarian
Chief Operating Officer

G. Thomas Waite III
*Treasurer
& Chief Financial Officer*

Andrew N. Rowan, Ph.D.
*Chief International Officer
& Chief Scientific Officer*

Katherine L. Karl
*General Counsel
& Chief Legal Officer*

Amy C. Rodgers
Secretary

DIRECTORS

Jeffrey J. Arciniaco
Eric L. Bernthal, Esq.
David Brownstein
Erika Brunson
Jerry Cesak
Anita W. Coupe, Esq.
Neil B. Fang, Esq., CPA
Jane Greenspun Gale
Spencer B. Haber
Amanda Hearst
Cathy Kangas
Paula A. Kislak, D.V.M.
Charles A. Laue
Jennifer Leaning, M.D., S.M.H.
Kathleen M. Linehan, Esq.
John Mackey
Mary I. Max
Patrick L. McDonnell
C. Thomas McMillen
Judy Ney
Sharon Lee Patrick
Marsha R. Perelman
Margaret Perenchio
Marian G. Probst
Jonathan M. Ratner
Joshua S. Reichert, Ph.D.
Walter J. Stewart, Esq.
Andrew Weinstein
Jason Weiss
Suzy Welch
David O. Wiebers, M.D.

January 11, 2018

Mayor Summers and City Council
Lakewood City Hall
12650 Detroit Avenue
Lakewood, OH 44107

Dear Mayor Summers and Council Members,

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the nation's largest animal protection organization, understands what a large responsibility it is to create a safe community for residents and to uphold standards of conduct through the enforcement of reasonable laws. We applaud the Council's decision to examine Lakewood's dog management ordinances, specifically the proposed repeal of the current breed ban. We strongly encourage the Council to refrain from implementing breed-specific regulations and instead focus on breed-neutral dog policy.

The era of breed-specific legislation (BSL) is over – communities are repealing their breed-based ordinances after finding it to be extremely expensive, draining, and damaging. It is an ineffective animal management strategy that has failed everywhere it has been tried, and twenty-one states already prohibit BSL. Experts in policy-making recommend against using breed or any single-factor approach towards community animal management, and research has shown that while singling out a particular type of dog may give an illusion of protection, it does not work.

The HSUS wholeheartedly supports reasonable regulations for *all* dogs and their owners, including provisions for regulating dogs who have shown themselves to be dangerous, as a critical tool in creating safe and humane communities. However, using physical breed standards as a proxy for determining whether a dog is dangerous is incredibly flawed. With advances in science and our increasing knowledge about a dog's DNA and the relationship to appearance and behavior, we now know that breed is a complex issue that does not neatly translate into predictive behavior patterns. The physical appearance of a dog has no basis in determining whether a dog is likely to harm someone. Instead, breed-neutral factors such as whether a dog is well socialized, altered, receiving veterinary care and other similar issues are significantly more predictive of the likelihood that a dog may be dangerous.

The most effective animal management strategies center around basic laws applied consistently to all dog owners. These laws, such as proper restraint and confinement ordinances, create standardized rules, norms, and expectations in the community and create a safer environment. When these laws are enforced consistently, enforcement agencies are able to positively engage the community through intervention, providing support and information to the vast majority of pet owners who love their pets and take good care of them.

The HSUS would be happy to speak with policy makers in greater detail about this and offer more specific recommendations for breed-neutral laws which give enforcement agencies

necessary powers to address dangerous incidents. The best use of limited local resources is an approach which ensures that dog owning residents are aware of standards and have access to the pet care services, information, and resources conducive to meeting them. Everyone wants to live in a safe community and we should do everything possible to prevent harmful dog-related incidents from occurring. Our resources on dog behavior, dog management and dog ownership are free, and we would welcome the opportunity to partner with the city.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Corey Roscoe". The ink is black and the signature is fluid and legible.

Corey Roscoe
C 614-570-0825
croscoe@humanesociety.org