

June 29, 2011

Good morning Representative Sears,

Ohio Valley Dog Owners Inc. is a coalition of dog clubs and businesses and dog trainers, breeders, and owners. We supported the original version of HB 14 with a letter to the House Criminal Justice Committee early in the hearing process.



We are dismayed that the Committee amended your simple bill to repeal breed specific restrictions in state law with provisions that overburden responsible dog owners and have the potential to cause owners to surrender pets because they cannot afford the consequences of owning a dog that escapes the yard more than twice.

While it is imperative to fix the portions of dangerous dog law deemed unconstitutional several years ago, we believe the new language in the bill is seriously flawed for several reasons, including:

- An apparent lack of consequences for owning a nuisance dog;
- a requirement to sterilize a dog for escaping its property more than twice regardless of the potential drawbacks to the surgery and without concern for the dog's age or potential as a breeding animal;
- a prohibition on owning a 'debarked' dangerous dog regardless of whether the procedure was done prior to the designation as dangerous;
- equal penalties for a three-time escapee with no bad behavior and a dog that has injured a person or killed another dog; and
- a provision allowing a dog warden to determine whether a dog is a nuisance, dangerous, or vicious w/o a court order or presentation of evidence in a court. (The provision allowing appeal puts the owner in the position of proving he is not guilty and off the government agent to prove he is guilty.)

The new language does not include provisions for removing the dangerous dog designation, so owners will be forced to incur the expenses for annual registration and insurance for the remainder of the dog's life even if it escaped the yard three times when only a year or two old – the prime years for a dog to wander – and have no further violations. There are also no provisions for expunging records if dog owners abide by the confinement provisions, take other steps to prevent more escapes or nuisance behavior, and avoid repeated incidents for a specified period of time.

We want truly dangerous dogs to be properly confined and irresponsible owners to be held accountable for their failure to protect their neighbors from dangerous dog behavior. To these ends, we'd like to discuss potential changes in the bill as it proceeds through the Senate.

Sincerely,

Norma Bennett Woolf, president
Ohio Valley Dog Owners Inc.

AKC legislative liaison, Clermont County Kennel Club and Canaan Dog Club of America

Ohio Valley Dog Owners Inc.

6241 N. State Route 48 ♦ Lebanon, Ohio 45036

(513) 932-3176 ♦ ovdog01@canismajor.com

www.ovdo.org