ANTI BSL SPEECH

FOR

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Hello everyone. I want to thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak on behalf of the repeal of Breed Specific Legislation currently in force in the state of Colorado. As a professional in the world of animal care-I am currently employed at a veterinary hospital in the area (**do you want to mention the name?)**, I can attest to what I have witnessed on a regular basis regarding the futility of this law. Of course the veterinarians and staff of our hospital have the utmost respect for all animals and the people who love them and that is why I am here. To enforce a Breed Specific Law targeting one **assumed** type of animal is inhumane, ineffective and ultimately detrimental to both the human and animal population.

Pit bulls get a bad rap. Is that the fault of the animal or the person who owns and/or trains them? With the litany of accusations focusing on pit bulls, what happens to other dogs that have wounded people? Do we focus on one profile… and make no mistake-what is being done is no more noble - think **racial** or **ethnic** profiling, or do we take a closer look at the relationship between people and dogs and develop a **humane** criteria for the education and accountability of **all** dog owners for the necessary responsibilities for the behavior of their animals? Let’s face it-to single out one specific breed sets the tone for a vicious cycle to be perpetuated-with the next questionable breed….and make no mistake-eliminate one threat and another will follow close behind-unless you address the core issues.

According to a report published by the Centers for Disease Control, in a study of dog bite related fatalities occurring in the United States in a twenty-year period from 1979 to 1998, less than 25% of those DBRF’s were caused by pit bulls. Who is going after the other breeds that are responsible for majority of those deaths? And in reality, animals are victims too. They are being punished and euthanized directly because of the irresponsibility of their owners. The BSL in effect in Colorado makes provisions with assumption as the focus. The government assumes people will adhere to regulations. Core issues need to be addressed. Irresponsible breeding, training and abandonment need to be addressed. People must be educated and monitored in such a way that they know, in no uncertain terms, that having animals is a serious responsibility. To eliminate or drastically regulate one breed sets the scenario to create a new breed of aggressors. In addition, just as we would not want to accept human profiling based on superficial characteristics, nor should we assume that every animal that looks like a certain breed is a natural born predator.

The current legislation misses the point. The wrong issue is at focus. Families and communities are being affected. Innocent animals and their owners are being caught in the dragnet and are facing hardship and discrimination. The BSL creates a form of hysteria in communities. There are more effective ways to deal with this very serious issue. If I was allowed more time, I would go into greater detail, but consider this-I saw a picture of a woman I know posted online. She had a large wound on her cheek, near her nose and dangerously close to her right eye. It was almost an inch long and looked freshly done. Apparently it was the work of her Chihuahua. While we’re focusing on pit bulls, other damage is being done. I am here to urge you to drop BSL, focus on educating **ALL** dog owners, regulating the treatment and well being of all animals, and working towards a greater understanding and accountability for all living beings. Thank you all.