



Pit Bulls in Utah City Spared from Discriminatory Ban *Best Friends Animal Society helps keep pit bulls legal in Cedar City*

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KANAB, UT (04/20/07) – A controversial pit-bull ban was defeated in a Utah city this week based partly on advice and statistics provided by Best Friends Animal Society showing that banning specific breeds does not make communities safer.

On Wednesday, April 11, 2007, the city council in Cedar City, Utah, voted unanimously not to adopt a proposed ban on pit bulls. The vote came after two intensive public hearings, with Best Friends stepping in to offer a solution.

Instead of the proposed ban that would have made owning a pit-bull-type dog illegal, the city council chose to adopt a version of Best Friends Animal Society's model ordinance for managing potentially dangerous dogs. The ordinance encourages owners to take responsibility for their dogs before an attack occurs.

“Dog attacks are a very serious health risk for any community, especially for children. These guidelines are a preemptive approach to address the safety needs of the whole community and must be considered before serious problems develop,” said Russ Mead, counsel for Best Friends Animal Society. “We are so pleased that Cedar City has taken the right steps to solve this problem in a proactive way.”

Best Friends Animal Society, which operates the nation's largest animal sanctuary, explained to city council members that pit-bull bans simply do not make the public safer from dog bites and attacks.

“Only 8 percent of dog bites or attacks in Cedar City in 2006 were by pit bulls or pit-bull mixes,” said Mead. “Banning those dogs does nothing to protect the public from 92 percent of the dogs that bite or attack. If you want to use dog bans to address this problem, you must ban Labrador retrievers, which account for most of the bites.”

According to Best Friends Animal Society, dog bites or attacks typically occur because of irresponsible, cruel or criminal owners, not because of the breed.

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“The dog may not have been spayed or neutered, socialized or trained properly. The dog may have been abused, chained, neglected or isolated. Or the dog may have been bred or trained to show aggression or specifically for fighting,” Mead said.

Best Friends’ model proposal for making safe communities includes the following:

- Dangerous dog laws that recognize levels of aggressive behavior and impose requirements on owners for managing dogs depending on the level of aggression.
- Strictly enforced leash or at-large laws: 82% of all dog bites are by dogs that are off leash or not confined in some way.
- Laws that restrict the tethering, chaining, penning or caging of dogs: dogs that are chained are 2.8 times more likely to be aggressive.
- Better access to low-cost spay/neuter programs: 90% of fatal dog attacks are by dogs that are not spayed or neutered.
- Tougher dog-fighting laws, including bans on breeding and training dogs for aggression.

For more information about Best Friends Animal Society and about how you can protect your community from dog attacks, please visit www.network.bestfriends.org/stopbs/.

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About Best Friends Animal Society

Located on 33,000 acres in Kanab, Utah, Best Friends Animal Society operates the country’s largest sanctuary for homeless animals and is home, on any given day, to about 2,000 dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, birds and other animals. Best Friends works globally with animal shelters and rescue groups to bring about a time when there will be no more homeless pets. Best Friends advances initiatives nationwide that promote community approaches to make the world a better place through kindness to animals, including adoption, spay/neuter, and humane education programs.

“Kindness to animals builds a better world for all of us.”