



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB®

# Understanding the Facts of Dog Breeding Laws

The American Kennel Club (AKC) supports strong enforcement of the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA), including new rules currently part of a 3-year implementation process set for completion in fall 2024.

Animal rights/protection groups are seeking to place new laws impacting hobby breeders in the 2023 Farm Bill; AKC believes existing rules governing breeders should be fully implemented and assessed before adding new, confusing and overly-restrictive laws.

Responsible dog breeders are experts on breeding and often have decades of practical and scientific experience. Stakeholders with experience in animal husbandry, including representatives from some of the 5000 AKC clubs around the country, should be consulted during the legislative process. By contrast, animal protection organizations that seek to limit pet breeding typically have little scientific knowledge or practical knowledge or experience with animal husbandry.

**AKC believes appropriate care that considers the purpose, characteristics and needs of the animal should always be the priority.**

**Laws governing dog ownership and breeding should be reasonable, enforceable and non-discriminatory. This is why AKC opposes HR 1462 as introduced and urges Congress to not advance these bills or allow them to be added to the Farm Bill.**

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\$4M Increase



## AKC SUPPORTS INCREASED AWA FUNDING

From FY 2019 – FY 2023 the USDA's budget for enforcing the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) remained static, despite increasing program demands. AKC supported an increase of \$4M for AWA enforcement in FY 2023 and continues to support additional resources to ensure that the AWA is properly enforced.



## STATES ALREADY HAVE FELONY CRUELTY LAWS

All 50 U.S. states already have felony cruelty laws. Thankfully, cases of animal cruelty to dogs are rare, which is why they sometimes make the news. In cases where such activities do occur, current laws should be fully enforced.



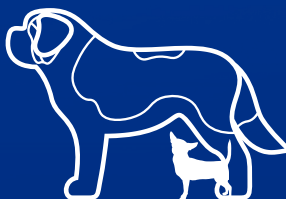
## 1.2 M DOGS IMPORTED INTO THE US EVERY YEAR

The annual replacement rate for pet dogs in the U.S. is 8 million/year. U.S. breeders cannot meet this demand for pet dogs. According to the CDC, approximately 1.2 million pet dogs were imported into the U.S. in 2019, primarily for the rescue retail and retail markets.\* Overly restrictive regulations undermine the flexibility needed for quality regulated pet breeding programs and incentivizes production of pets in overseas markets, where welfare laws do not exist.



## MANY HOBBY BREEDERS ARE ALREADY SUBJECT TO COMMERCIAL LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Dog owners and hobby breeders who have any combination of 5 intact female mammals (rabbits, cats, hamsters, gerbils, dogs, etc.) and transfer one offspring sight unseen are subject to federal licensing and regulation as a commercial breeder. A person could own only one dog and have one litter and still be subject to federal USDA licensing and kenneling requirements for commercial dog breeder/dealers.



## DOGS ARE THE MOST DIVERSE SPECIES OF MAMMAL

From the tiny Chihuahua to the massive Saint Bernard, dogs are the most diverse species of land mammal. Their requirements for temperatures, housing, exercise, food, etc. vary. The one-size-fits-all rules in the "Puppy Protection Act" (HR 1642) would undermine small, high quality specialized breeding programs.



## WHAT QUALIFIES AS 'PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM'?

Goldie's Law (HR 1788) requires USDA inspectors to destroy or remove a dog from its home if they believe it is experiencing "psychological harm"; but the proposal doesn't define what this means. It also de-prioritizes the care and wellbeing of dogs by removing the distinction between care and paperwork violations.

\* Demographic replacement rate; 2019, the last year for which data is available