



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUBSM

Wednesday, April 21, 2010

The Honorable Julian Castro
Mayor, City of San Antonio
PO BOX 839966
San Antonio, TX 78283

RE: Concerns with San Antonio's Animal Ordinance

Dear Mayor Castro:

Along with our Texas federation of dog owners, the Responsible Pet Owners Alliance (RPOA), the American Kennel Club (AKC) is deeply concerned about San Antonio's current animal control issues and new proposed changes to the city's and Bexar County's animal ordinance.

As a not-for-profit organization founded in 1884, the AKC has been devoted to the advancement and welfare of dogs for 126 years. We oppose the concepts of breeding permits, breeding bans, or the mandatory spaying or neutering of purebred dogs. Instead, the AKC supports reasonable and enforceable laws that protect the welfare and health of purebred dogs and do not restrict the rights of responsible breeders and owners.

In 2007 when the current animal ordinances (San Antonio Code of Ordinances, Ch. 5) were imposed, AKC and RPOA opposed them, noting that similar ordinances elsewhere had resulted in reducing licensing compliance rates. In 2009, only 358 litter permits and 778 intact dog permits were sold in San Antonio. For a city with an estimated population of 1.4 million, this suggests extremely low compliance with current requirements. Without new educational, distribution, or benefit mechanisms (such as low-cost spay/neuter and vaccination programs) to promote current or other future requirements, extremely low compliance rates may be expected to continue. Low vaccination rates and dogs at-large issues also significantly increase the potential threat to San Antonio's public health and safety.

Our experience and that of many other cities throughout the country demonstrate that mandatory spay/neuter is an ineffective solution to animal control problems because it fails to address the heart of the issue—irresponsible ownership. These laws are extremely difficult to enforce and can be evaded by irresponsible animal owners simply by not licensing their pets. At the same time, it hurts responsible, law-abiding breeders who raise healthy, well cared-for dogs, and work to ensure that puppies are placed with responsible owners. Enforcement of existing leash, confinement and nuisance laws, combined with positive educational/incentive programs are a better alternative that does not discriminate against responsible owners.

The American Kennel Club appreciates your time and consideration. The AKC, the Responsible Pet Owners Alliance, and your constituent dog breeders and owners would be happy to assist you in developing further, specific recommendations to address concerns San Antonio's animal control issues. Please do not hesitate to contact us at 919-816-3720 if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Sheila Goffe, Director
AKC Government Relations

Cc: Members, San Antonio City Council

PMG