

The Baltimore Sun

Letters to the Editor

Should city restrict pit bull ownership?

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In his column "Sorry, I'm not a fan of your fierce dog," Kevin Cowherd advises readers to go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site as a way to prove his argument that certain breeds of dogs are more dangerous than others.

But one of the items on that site is a report titled "A Community Approach to Dog Bite Prevention" written by a task force of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

The report states that efforts to "supplement existing animal control laws with ordinances directed toward control of specific breeds ... are inappropriate and ineffective." As the report argues, this often drives inhumane dog owners underground or causes them to switch to a different breed. Breed-specific laws are also often unenforceable, as breed identification is difficult to determine. And such laws do not address the real issue - responsible dog ownership.

The report goes on to state that "enforcement of restraint laws is essential" and that "a well-resourced animal control agency is vital for public health and safety."

If Baltimore wants to protect its citizens, it must adequately fund its animal control operations so that the city can properly enforce existing laws.

Adding more laws that cannot be enforced, such as a ban on pit bulls, would not make our community safer.

The safety of our citizens, especially children, is too important to propose solutions that simply do not work.

Aileen Gabbey
Baltimore

The writer is executive director of the Maryland SPCA.