

HCS HB 1398 -- BREED SPECIFIC DOG LEGISLATION

SPONSOR: DeGroot

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Local Government by a vote of 10 to 2.

The bill specifies that the General Assembly occupies and preempts the entire field of legislation touching in any way the control or regulation of specific breeds of dogs. However, a village, town, city, or county can still prohibit dogs from running at large or to further control or regulate dogs within its boundaries so long as the ordinance, order, policy, or regulation is not breed specific.

This bill is similar to HCS HB 905 (2017).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that all dogs are individuals and deserve a chance, and cities need to quit tearing families apart. Breed specific legislation amounts to criminal liability for non-criminal action. A good enforceable vicious-dog law is better and more effective.

Testifying for the bill were Representative DeGroot; Karen Runk, Missouri K9 Friends; Doug Crews, Missouri Veterinary Medical Association; Missouri Federation of Animal Owners; Missouri Animal Husbandry Association; and the Kansas City Pet Project.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that they used to believe that dogs were not inherently mean but were trained to be that way. Experience has now convinced them otherwise.

Testifying against the bill were Dora Firmin Pennington; Missouri Municipal League; Jessica Loh; Missouri Alliance for Animal Legislation; Latricia Mayer; and Jaime Dial.