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NEW ATTITUDES

Pit bull bans are unfair, fail to solve problems

By LISA CASTON

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Why are lawmakers picking on dogs like mine? I am having a hard time understanding cities that have banned the possession of pit bulls.

My dog, Vedo, is an 18-month-old, red-nosed pit. He is also my best friend. He is great indoors as well as outside. He sleeps 2 feet away from me, he eats in my kitchen just like me, and is as spoiled as a child. When I am upset, I feel as if he understands and even tries to console me.

He is like a person in every way with the exception of walking on all fours and drinking from the toilet.

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study of dog bite injuries in the United States from 1979 until 1998 showed that most fatal dog attacks were caused by pit bulls at 76 deaths, Rottweilers at 44 deaths, followed by German shepherds at 27 deaths.

While this may seem like a good reason to ban pit bulls, I totally disagree. True, the pit bulls did cause more deaths, but they also account for approximately one out of every five dogs in the pet population.

Even though irresponsible owners were likely the cause of many of these incidents, the media and lawmakers continue to use the CDC statistics to make claims that certain breeds of dogs are inherently more vicious than others.

As Karen Delise, author of the book "Fatal Dog Attacks," wrote:

"A fatal dog attack is always the culmination of past and present events that include: inherited and learned behaviors, genetics, breeding, socialization, function of the dog, popularity of breed, physical condition and size of the dog, individual temperament, reproductive status of the dog, environmental stresses, owner responsibility, victim behavior, victim size and physical condition, timing and misfortune."

I think the way you raise your dog is more important than what breed it is. We should stop judging an entire population of dogs, because it does little to prevent severe dog attacks when the real causes and events that contribute to the fatalities are being masked.

New Attitudes is a weekly opinion column written by readers between the ages of 15-22. E-mail submissions or

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