



General Assembly considers prohibiting dog breed discrimination

Posted: Jan 28, 2010 4:08 PM
Updated: Jan 28, 2010 7:50 PM

By Melissa Correa - [bio](#) | [email](#)
Posted by Terry Alexander - [email](#)

RICHMOND, VA (WWBT) – As it stands right now in Virginia, a shelter can euthanize or refuse to adopt out a specific breed. HB 429 would run that option out of the Commonwealth.

Margaret Doyle can't imagine life without Rosie, her Terrier mix. When it comes to restricting which breeds should automatically be euthanized or adopted out...

"I think that's absolutely absurd," said Doyle.

A recent court decision allows shelters to discriminate against certain breeds, but a bill up for vote in the General Assembly would change that.

"The focus of our concern is really with respect to pitbulls because that is the breed of dog that has suffered a great deal of discrimination," said Robin Starr with the Richmond SPCA.

"You don't hear a lot of really good, positive things about pitbulls and they're wonderful dogs," said Doyle.

No local shelters are currently euthanizing specific breeds. Church Hill Animal Hospital says it's not the solution even though people should be careful around pitbulls. Pounds should be mindful of matching a dog with a potential owner.

"You should blame the deed not the breed," said Doyle.

"My dog doesn't discriminate. He plays with everyone," said Jordan Spencer.

And that's the message Starr is promoting. Just because a shelter may not have the tools to change a dog's behavior doesn't mean one specific breed should automatically be put down.

"So I think for all of us who want fairness and kindness and decency in our world, it is important to support a bill like this," Starr said.

Right now HB429 is in a house sub-committee. If passed, the bill would become law and take effect July 1.

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