



**AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®**

DOG LIMIT LAWS

BACKGROUND:

Animal control is a major concern in many communities. Often, government officials see placing a limit on the number of dogs a person may own as a viable solution. Limit laws, however, are ineffective, difficult to enforce, and fail to address the true problem of irresponsible ownership.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- **LIMIT LAWS WILL NOT STOP IRRESPONSIBLE OWNERS**
Irresponsible owners exist regardless of how many dogs they own. There are responsible owners of many dogs and irresponsible owners of a single dog. Selecting an arbitrary limit will not prevent irresponsible ownership.
- **LIMIT LAWS PUNISH RESPONSIBLE OWNERS**
Limit laws target all owners, regardless of their actions or the behavior of their animals. Responsible owners should be allowed to use their own discretion in determining the number of dogs they can keep on their own property. A limit on the number of dogs an individual can own would restrict the many responsible breeders who raise and breed purebred dogs. These breeders make a serious commitment to their dogs and to ensuring the future health, welfare and quality of their individual breeds. They work to carefully screen potential owners to make sure the dogs will be placed in a safe, caring environment. In addition, many proposed laws that seek to target irresponsible breeders impact the many responsible fanciers and dog owners who also rescue unwanted animals and either personally adopt them as pets or find them permanent homes.
- **LIMIT LAWS ARE DIFFICULT TO ENFORCE**
Enforcement of limit laws would require local animal control officers to physically go to the home or kennel of every owner of multiple dogs and count how many they own. Many officials propose licensing as a way to address this issue. Irresponsible dog owners can easily evade licensing by simply not registering their dogs.
- **LIMIT LAWS CAN CREATE MORE BURDENS ON A COMMUNITY**
Limit laws are very costly and burdensome to enforce. If someone owns more than their allotted number of dogs, they will be forced to dispose of some of them in order to come into compliance with the new law. These dogs will likely end up in shelters and/or euthanized at taxpayers' expense.

A BETTER SOLUTION IS AVAILABLE

The American Kennel Club and its affiliated clubs understand the challenges of creating effective animal control ordinances for a community. We support laws that target irresponsible dog owners and substandard animal care; however, limit laws do not address these issues. Limit laws are ineffective, difficult to enforce and unfair to responsible dog owners. Government officials should instead focus on targeting irresponsible owners *regardless* of the number of dogs owned.