



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

January 17, 2014

The Honorable Joseph F. Vallario, Jr.
101 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: AKC Supports Overturning *Tracey v. Solesky* Breed-Specific Ruling

Dear Chairman Vallario and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The American Kennel Club (AKC) writes on behalf of our 76 affiliated dog clubs in Maryland and the thousands of responsible dog owners and breeders in the state to thank you for recognizing the importance of addressing the issue of dangerous dogs in Maryland and for ensuring that both the safety of the community and the rights of responsible dog owners are protected.

While we support the intent of both House Bill 73 and House Bill 80 to overturn this ruling, we believe that House Bill 80 will prove more effective in addressing your concerns and protecting the rights of responsible dog owners in cases where a dog acts out of protection or defense.

Since the ruling in *Tracey v. Solesky* was announced in 2012, law-abiding, responsible dog owners have already begun to be punished simply for the breed of dog they choose to own or train, regardless of the behavior or specific actions of the dog. Landlords have also been held liable for allowing certain breeds to be kept on their properties. If this trend continues, increasing numbers of dogs will be needlessly sent to shelters and/or euthanized at taxpayer expense, rather than being kept in loving homes.

Thank you again for your willingness to consider measures that will overturn this discriminatory ruling and restore the rights of responsible dog owners and landlords in Maryland.

Sincerely,

Sheila Goffe
Government Relations Director