



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

AKC Federation Statement of Principles

Dog owners bear a special responsibility to their canine companions to provide proper care and humane treatment at all times. Proper care and humane treatment include an adequate and nutritious diet, clean water, clean living conditions, regular veterinary care, kind and responsive human companionship, and training in appropriate behavior. We believe that dogs should not be kept in circumstances or numbers where these needs can not be adequately fulfilled.

Responsible breeding programs should be undertaken for the purpose of preserving breed characteristics and producing healthy, well-socialized puppies. Responsible breeders are expected to give careful consideration to health issues and temperament. We support scrupulous enforcement of the federal Animal Welfare Act, and state and local regulations governing the humane care of animals.

We oppose unreasonable limitations on pet ownership, such as numerical limits and the prohibition of dogs for residents of senior citizen and government subsidized housing facilities. AKC supports “curbing” and clean-up ordinances, leash laws, nuisance laws, and other reasonable regulations designed to ensure that dogs and their owners remain respected members of their communities.

We oppose the concept of breeding permits, breeding bans and mandatory spay/neuter of purebred dogs. Instead, we support reasonable and enforceable laws that protect the welfare and health of dogs and do not restrict the rights of breeders and owners who take their responsibilities seriously.

We believe that decisions about an animal’s medical treatment, including decisions about spay/neuter, tail docking, ear cropping and dewclaw removal, should be made by responsible owners and breeders in consultation with their veterinarian, and not mandated by the government.

We support laws that: establish a fair process by which specific dogs are identified as “dangerous” based on stated, measurable actions; impose appropriate penalties on irresponsible owners; and establish a well-defined method for dealing with dogs proven to be dangerous. We strongly oppose any legislation that determines a dog to be “dangerous” based on breed or phenotype. We unequivocally oppose dog fighting and the breeding and/or training of dogs for fighting.

We support the use of the term *owner*. We believe that the term *guardian* may reduce the legal status and value of dogs as property and thereby restrict the rights of owners, veterinarians, and government agencies to protect and care for dogs.

We strongly support the training and use of dogs to provide assistance and service to humans. Dogs provide valuable service as: seeing eye dogs; hearing dogs; therapy dogs; handicapped assistance dogs; drug, bomb, and arson detection dogs; and tracking dogs to locate missing persons and fugitives.

We strongly supports the interaction and mutual enjoyment of owners and dogs in sporting activities such as hunting and field trials; in working circumstances such as herding, tracking, and pulling; and in competition events such as dog shows, obedience trials, agility trials, and other performance events and tests.