

American Sporting Dog Alliance

October 2008 Newsletter

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Dog Owners Stare Down HSUS And PETA

The American Sporting Dog Alliance has been at the forefront of defending dog owners' rights this year in 12 states and federally in the face of powerful challenges from extremely well funded and organized animal rights groups.

Thus far, we have won 10 victories, suffered one defeat, and also won two partial victories that fell short of our goals. The jury is still out in three states and on one federal bill. We are preparing for battle in six additional states and the November elections, and we have provided assistance to local groups in eight other states.

In every battle, we have been significantly outgunned in money and manpower by radical animal rights groups such as the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). HSUS, PETA and their allies poured millions of dollars, thousands of staff hours and hundreds of volunteers into many of these battles, but dog owners were equal to the challenge.

We won far more often than we lost.

The American Sporting Dog Alliance has refined a strategy that has proven to be very effective:

- Research the issues. Find out the facts and counter the fabrications of the animal rights groups with the truth. Give dog owners the ammunition they need to communicate with elected officials.
- Reach out to thousands of dog owners with our reports, encourage them to take action as citizens, and let them know how they can do it. We have done this through our email database, which now has more than 75,000 email addresses of dog owners, and also through posting on more than 300 message boards. We believe our reports now reach well over 125,000 dog owners around the country. We want to double this number over the coming year.
- Our outreach plan concentrates on locating dog owners who are not affiliated with existing organizations and who are not already politically active on animal rights issues. We estimate that less than one percent of America's dog owners are politically active on animal rights issues. Rather than preaching to the choir, we focus on finding and involving the "silent majority" of dog owners.

- We develop local leadership teams in each state, county or city where we work. We believe local people should call the shots and make the decision, and see ourselves in a supportive role to assist them in any way we can. We also have put together strong teams of attorneys and veterinarians to serve local groups as consultants and advisors on the issues.
- We reach out to existing groups that have many dog owners among their membership. These include sportsmen's clubs, firearms rights advocacy groups, field trial clubs, show clubs, performance clubs, breed clubs, animal rescue groups, local animal welfare groups, and farmers' organizations.
- We also work with existing state, local and national dog owners' organizations, and offer our assistance to any group that fights to protect the rights of dog owners. We regard our work as complimentary to the efforts of existing groups and always offer to work collaboratively with them.
- And we form positive relationships with many elected officials on the local, state and federal level. Our goal is to develop open lines of communication with public officials in order to help them to fully understand the issues and the views of their constituents.

Here is a summary of the work we have done this year, beginning with pending issues. If you would like more information on any of these issues or want to help us work toward defeating them, please contact us at asda@csonline.net.

Federal Legislation

We did groundbreaking research on the recently introduced Puppy Uniform Protection Statute, or "PUPS." Our research exposed HSUS lies about this legislation in their reports to Congress and to the public, and our analysis was sent to our entire database to give dog owners a way to take action.

This legislation, H.R. 6949 and S. 3519, is sponsored by animal rights sympathizers Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Rep. Sam Farr (D-CA). We expect them to push for passage in the "lame duck" session following the November election.

HSUS and the sponsors claim that the bill would affect only people who sell more than 50 puppies or dogs a year. This simply isn't true, and they know it.

In fact, the legislation requires federal licensure for anyone who raises 50 dogs a year, which includes many kennels that do not do any breeding. Most professional trainers and handlers of field trial, show, obedience or performance dogs would have more than 50 dogs in their kennels over the course of a year. In fact, many trainers and handlers who employ helpers would have more than 50 dogs at any given time, and most do not breed at all. A boarding kennel, dog daycare service, hound hunt club, hunting plantation or circus could be included under a definition that they "raise" more than 50 dogs per year.

Earlier this year, we worked to defeat an amendment to the Farm Bill by Sen. Durbin that would have required virtually anyone who raises a litter of puppies to be federally licensed and inspected.

Chicago and Illinois

We are working with a very strong team of local people in Chicago to defeat two planned ordinances that would devastate everyone who raises dogs there.

One proposed ordinance mandates the forced sterilization of dogs and cats in Chicago and provides draconian rules for “dangerous” dogs. The second ordinance defines virtually anyone who raises dogs as a “pet retailer” and subjecting them to expensive licensing, inspections and intensive regulation.

In response, we have done groundbreaking research about Chicago animal shelters, dog bite statistics, dog fighting and the animal rights group ties of people who support the ordinance. Our research has shown conclusively that Chicago animal shelters have done a tremendous job, and virtually no healthy and adoptable dogs are euthanized in the entire metropolitan area. We also have shown that the incidence of dog bites has dropped dramatically, and that dog fighting is not a significant problem in the city.

Our local team of activists has been very successful in gaining support from the Chicago and statewide associations of veterinarians, many people involved in the rescue movement, animal shelter leaders and other animal welfare professionals.

However, they need your help as these ordinances near formal introduction in City Council. We are urging Chicagoans and area residents to volunteer their assistance. Please contact us at asda@csonline.net or our Chicago team: Michele Smith (msmith@cmscrescue.com), Karen Perry (ouilmette4@sbcglobal.net) and Margo Milde (mrm1206@yahoo.com). Your assistance is vital!

The Chicago ordinances are the tip of a very large iceberg. HSUS has named a new Illinois statewide director, and also has opened an office in Wisconsin. We also are receiving reports that HSUS has begun a “puppy mill” campaign in Indiana.

Dog owners in all of those states can expect serious HSUS-sponsored animal rights legislation in the coming months. We know that Illinois will face a possible puppy “lemon law” in the very near future, which will make breeders liable for complaints by puppy buyers. Some “lemon law” legislation is fair, but other proposals are aimed at conscientious breeders by making it too risky to sell a puppy.

Massachusetts

Animal rights groups have played every dirty political trick in the books to gain rapid consideration of devastating legislation by bypassing the normal legislative review process.

HB 5092 mandates spaying or neutering of all dogs in the state that don't meet the almost impossible requirements for an exemption, proposes a \$500 annual license fee

for all intact dogs that can gain an exemption, refuses to recognize dogs from many registries such as the Field Dog Stud Book (America's oldest registry), allows seizures, forced sterilization and euthanasia of dogs for even one minor animal control law violation, bans tethering, and paves the way to ban specific breeds of dogs.

These provisions would destroy the breeding of purebred dogs in the state.

The Massachusetts legislature's Joint Commission on Municipalities and Regional Government has set an October 23 hearing on House Bill 5092. We are organizing dog owners to voice vigorous opposition.

Ohio

If it were not for the possibility of political dirty tricks, we could declare victory on three different pieces of Ohio legislation. However, we know that animal rights groups rely on political dirty tricks to accomplish their hidden agenda that leads to the elimination of animal ownership in America.

Working with the Ohio Valley Dog Owners Association and the newly forming Ohio Federation of Dog Clubs, we have been able to stop all three bills in the Legislature as the current session expired.

However, the Legislature has scheduled several weeks of a "lame duck" session following the November election, and these sessions are when much political mischief occurs. Controversial legislation often passes during "lame duck" sessions, as many elected officials will not be returning to office in January and the rest of them will not face re-election for at least two years.

We have worked in Ohio to block breed-specific legislation, and also HB 223 (SB 173), which would destroy the breeding of purebred dogs in the state. In the House, we failed to stop HB 446, which creates many harmful animal control measures, but thus far we have been able to stall it in the Senate.

All three bills are dead if the Legislature doesn't do anything in the "Lame Duck" session. But anything can happen in "Lame Duck" sessions.

Thus, we are urging dog owners to exercise extreme vigilance. Also, we will make the identities of elected officials who support these three bills available to Ohio voters prior to the election. Please contact us to help at asda@csonline.net.

We are deeply indebted to our Ohio leadership team, which includes veterinarian Lori Hunt and volunteers Becky Dunlap and Kendra Anne Bobulski. All three of these volunteers have worked very hard for Ohio dog owners, and their efforts have played a major role in helping us to reach dog owners in California, New Mexico, New York, Massachusetts, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Pennsylvania. Both also have been active in helping to form the new Ohio Federation, and we have lent this group our entire Ohio database.

No one has contributed more to the fight to preserve the rights of dog owners than Ms. Dunlap and Ms. Bobulski. They truly are heroes.

Also in Ohio, we have been very active in helping field trialers to maintain their use of public lands.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania is our home state, and terrible animal rights legislation in 2006-2007 was a major factor in the formation of the American Sporting Dog Alliance.

Since then, we have been uncompromising and relentless in our efforts to protect Pennsylvania dog owners from animal rights legislation aimed at destroying us. It has been an uphill battle, as Gov. Ed Rendell has fully embraced the animal rights agenda.

HB 2525 was signed into law last week. It regulates commercial kennels, and also sets the regulatory and law enforcement framework for regulating all kennels and dogs in Pennsylvania. While we remain opposed to several parts of this law, we also played the leading role in making it much better than Rendell's initial proposal.

We kept fighting long after all other dog owners' groups took positions of varying degrees of "non-opposition" to the legislation.

Our success can be measured in several crucial Senate amendments to the legislation that were made after other dog owners' organizations quit fighting.

That success was noteworthy because, to our knowledge, it was the first time ever that animal rights legislation was significantly improved because it infringed on the Bill of Rights and the federal and state Constitutions. This was the major thrust of our objections.

The Senate amendments completely addressed all of our constitutional concerns, and several senators have credited us with making them aware of these issues.

We also played the leading role in stopping HB 2532, which would have imposed untenable restrictions on breeders who dock tails or clip dewclaws on newborn puppies, which is standard practice worldwide. This bill also maintained prohibitions against ear cropping.

The American Sporting Dog Alliance was the only dog owners' organization to vigorously oppose HB 2532 from the beginning. Because of our concerns, the Senate allowed HB 2532 to die.

We expect that Rendell will introduce very tough dog and kennel regulations next year, as well as other kinds of animal rights legislation. To help, please join and support our Pennsylvania team by contacting us at asda@csonline.net.

Also in Pennsylvania, we fought to maintain the grouse study area near State College, and advocated for effective land management for wildlife on grouse trial grounds in the Allegheny National Forest near Marienville.

California

California has been a battleground state this year, and HSUS and PETA threw everything they had into several key battles.

We won. They lost. Period.

The biggest victory was the total and complete defeat of AB 1634. We worked with several excellent California organizations to help to defeat the original bill, which would have mandated the forced sterilization of all dogs and cats. Then we helped to defeat amended versions that would have turned animal rights activists into vigilantes, and a later version that would have given frightening power to animal control and animal cruelty officers.

Our efforts injected the voices of thousands of dog owners into this debate, and it convinced the state Senate to defeat this legislation by a wide margin.

We wish to thank our advisory board members Mike Spies, veterinarian Dr. Charles Hjerpe and attorney Tom Griffin for their invaluable assistance.

Our research and outreach to dog owners also played a major role in the defeat of spay and neuter mandates in Kern and Santa Barbara Counties.

The Kern County supervisors rejected a spay/neuter mandate outright. We made them aware of the results of our investigations into their shelter and animal control system.

In Santa Barbara County, the supervisors rejected a mandate and appointed a committee to study non-mandatory measures following our reports about the facts of the issue and active involvement by our local team of Susan Sakauye and Allison Iwamoto, and the valiant efforts of the local kennel club.

However, animal rights extremists are now trying to take over the committee and exclude participation by dog owners and dog ownership advocates. The chairman is veterinarian Ron Faoro. Faoro, and animal rights extremist who was discredited by the state association of veterinarians for falsely claiming their endorsement of AB 1634, is now trying to bring back mandatory measures to the committee, despite the supervisors' directive.

Please contact us to take an active role in the Santa Barbara situation, at asda@csonline.net.

We also are offering our support to groups that are trying to overturn the Los Angeles mandatory spay/neuter ordinance in court, and our upcoming research reports will detail the most extreme possible form of animal rights fanaticism in the sheltering system in Los Angeles.

Other States

- New York – Our research and outreach efforts derailed a sneak attack by animal rights group supporters in the Legislature to make hobby dog breeders into highly regulated “pet dealers.” This legislation, which also would have affected professional trainers, handlers and others, was killed in committee following a massive outcry from dog owners.
- Michigan – We joined forces with statewide groups to stop HB 6395 in its tracks. Our reports and outreach efforts contributed strongly to an outpouring of opposition from dog owners, which caused the sponsor to kill this legislation.
- Oklahoma – We played the lead role in derailing devastating kennel legislation that would have destroyed the hobby breeding of purebred dogs. We also joined forces with farm and ranch organizations, and key legislators, that will be an effective defense against future animal rights legislation. Our reports exposed the fraudulent journalism in the Tulsa newspaper that was nothing more than animal rights propaganda.
- Wisconsin – We backed up great statewide organizations to defeat kennel, breeding and “lemon law” legislation that would have destroyed hobby breeding. Our outreach efforts yielded hundreds of letters to legislators from dog owners, as well as numerous personal contacts. However, we expect this legislation to be back again next year, and are urging Wisconsin dog owners to maintain extreme vigilance.
- Dallas – We lost a major fight in Dallas, with the enactment of a tough spay/neuter mandate. If Pennsylvania proves that some elected officials will listen to logic and reason, Dallas proves that some will not. We conclusively proved that the forces behind this ordinance represent a takeover of community groups by radical PETA and HSUS activists. We also conclusively proved that shelter statistics do not show a need for this ordinance, and also that existing leash laws are the answer to roaming dogs. But a majority on City Council refused to listen to the facts, and several council members were clearly animal rights group sympathizers. With 20-20 hindsight, the error we made was that local leadership failed to fully reach out to Black, Hispanic and low-income neighborhoods, whose representatives on Council formed the key swing votes to decide the issue. Instead, dog ownership advocates were pigeonholed as elitists and as a small minority in the city. The good news is that the Texas Rifle Association did a great job in Dallas, and have proven to be a staunch ally of animal owners.
- Texas – We are working with Texas groups to overturn spay/neuter mandates in Dallas, San Antonio and Houston, and also to defeat expected 2009 state legislation from an energized animal rights group constituency.
- Connecticut – We stopped statewide mandatory spay/neuter legislation in its tracks. The proposed sponsor killed the bill when dog owners created a firestorm. We also discredited and neutralized a task force to link animal abuse and domestic violence, which would have imposed the animal rights agenda in schools, the criminal justice system and social service agencies. We also won a great ally in Gov. Jody Rell.

- Virginia – Working with several great statewide groups, we were able to help improve kennel legislation in Virginia significantly to exclude most sporting kennels. We are now assisting statewide groups in a state study that could lead to severe restrictions on hunting with hounds.
- Next Projects – Our agenda includes expanded efforts to help stop bad kennel laws and zoning ordinances in New Jersey, kennel laws in Maine, and spay/neuter mandates in Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada. We also plan to offer additional assistance to Florida groups that are trying to overturn spay/neuter mandates in Volusia and Palm Beach Counties, and to stop destructive ordinances in several other counties.

We Need You!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Now!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The American Sporting Dog Alliance needs you!
 In fact, we can't do our job without you.
 We need you to volunteer to help.
 We need your leadership.
 We need your donations.
 We need your ideas.
 We need your commitment.

Without you, we will fail. With your support, we will continue to beat back challenges from animal rights groups and protect the rights of dog owners.

The challenges we will face in the coming year are extreme. Inaction and apathy won't cut it anymore.

The American Sporting Dog Alliance represents owners, breeders and professionals who work with breeds of dogs that are used for hunting. We welcome people who work with other breeds, too, as legislative issues affect all of us. We are a grassroots movement working to protect the rights of dog owners, and to assure that the traditional relationships between dogs and humans maintains its rightful place in American society and life.

The American Sporting Dog Alliance also needs your help so that we can continue to work to protect the rights of dog owners. Your membership, participation and support are truly essential to the success of our mission. We are funded solely by the donations of our members, and maintain strict independence.

Please visit us on the web at <http://www.americansportingdogalliance.org>. Our email is ASDA@csonline.net. Complete directions to join by mail or online are found at the bottom left of each page.

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