

Dear

I am contacting you in relation to the recent announcement that the Irish Government is to ban XL Bully dogs later this year and to express my deep concern with what seems like a rash and ill thought out plan, a knee jerk reaction to the sensationalist stories running in the media following recent dog attacks.

Do we ban a specific make of car when it has an accident? No, we penalise the driver. Dogs are exactly the same. People are responsible for dogs, as the recent campaign your department undertook demonstrates. And yet here you are putting the responsibility for mistakes back onto dogs, when people are responsible.

It is clear from evidence from the UK that banning a specific breed does not tackle the problem. In the UK, NHS statistics show that dog bite incidents have increased by over 200% since 1999, following the introduction of the Dangerous Dogs Act (1991).

See below three main areas for consideration taken from the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#)

- **Breed-specific laws can be difficult to enforce, especially when a dog's breed can't easily be determined or if it is of mixed breed.**
- **Breed-specific legislation is discriminatory against responsible owners and their dogs.**
- **Breed bans do not address the social issue of irresponsible pet ownership.**

A much better approach is to licence these dogs, **tightening & enforcing legislation** around ownership of so called restricted breeds and also around dog breeding and puppy farms – do you know that Ireland is the **Puppy Farm Capital of Europe**? We desperately need proper legislation around all areas of dog ownership, from when the puppy is born through to adulthood. **Breed-specific bans are a simplistic answer to a far more complex social problem, and they have the potential to divert attention and resources from more effective approaches.**

Rescues up and down the country are already at breaking point and this ban will only exasperate the problem as bull breeds will become even harder to rehome. The answer is not to put all these innocent dogs to sleep.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Best,